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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CHÉTICAMP: AN ACADIAN COMMUNITY DIVIDED BY A FRENCH LANGUAGE CONFLICT

BY

RICHARD ALBEN JULIEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1987

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled CHÉTICAMP: AN ACADIAN COMMUNITY DIVIDED BY A FRENCH LANGUAGE CONFLICT submitted by RICHARD ALBEN JULIEN
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION.

Nick Koch
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Date: January 19, 1987

Abstract

A language conflict has divided the Acadian community of Chéticamp in northwestern Nova Scotia for the past four years. The controversy stems from a recent change in the provincial educational policy that offered Acadian communities the possibility of an increased French curriculum. What appeared as a tightly knit and homogeneous French Acadian village to outsiders, actually harboured a number of serious linguistic, cultural and social cleavages. These differences were manifested in the attempt to increase French content in the local school.

Despite the community's unanimity on the need to preserve the French language and Acadian culture, there persists a vehement disagreement about whether more French courses should be added to the present program. In concrete terms, one segment of the population advocates more French programs and another segment prefers the educational status quo. The underpinnings of the struggle consists of incompatible values whereby compromise was tantamount to defeat. Consequently, polarization of the community, intransigent positions and public acrimony enters almost every aspect of Chéticamp life.

The dispute expressed itself in organized opposing committees, a vigorous lobbying of government officials at the various levels, public forums and debates, a school

boycott, the involvement of outside agencies, a community plebiscite and several acts of violence. The final outcome was decided at the local school board level but left a legacy of divided families, ruptured friendships and an atmosphere of tension and mistrust between community members.

The present thesis undertakes an analysis of conflict parties, its supporters, the contrasting positions with respect to educational, linguistic and cultural policies, possible motivations, the reasons that gave rise to the impasse, the nature of the struggle and its eventual resolution.

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Chapter I

Rationale and Methodology

Introduction

The Acadians are a community that has survived numerous British and later Anglo-Canadian attempts to defeat, deport or assimilate them. Historically abandoned by France, the Acadians learned to adapt to the vicissitudes of life under British rule. In more modern times, their culture has been penetrated by English electronic media, increased contact with anglophones, an English-Canadian school system and the increased need to work in an English-speaking world. Coinciding with the growing problem of anglicization of the remaining Acadian areas in Nova Scotia, the provincial government enacted legislation to assist in the battle against assimilation. Conceivably, the Acadians should have welcomed any opportunity to help them retain their language and culture, subject to certain conditions. But, as this study will demonstrate, not all Acadians are willing to embrace educational changes that may provide more problems than benefits. The following "case study" is a local expression of a national drama--a manifestation of 200 years of French-English conflict.

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze a

French language conflict that has divided the Acadian community of Chéticamp in northwestern Nova Scotia for the past four years. The controversy stems from a recent change in the provincial educational policy that offered Acadian communities the possibility of an increased French curriculum. Despite the community's unanimity on the need to preserve the French language and Acadian culture, there persists a vehement disagreement about whether more French courses should be added to the present program. In concrete terms, one segment of the population advocates increased curricular emphasis on French and another segment prefers the status quo. Incompatible values underpinned the struggle and compromise for either side would be tantamount to defeat. Consequently, polarization of the community, intranseigent positions and public bitterness entered into almost every aspect of Chéticamp life.

The dispute expressed itself in organized opposing committees, a vigorous lobbying of government officials at the various levels, public forums and debates, a school boycott, the involvement of outside agencies, a community plebiscite and occasional acts of violence. The final outcome was decided at the local school board level but left a legacy of divided families, ruptured friendships and an atmosphere of tension and mistrust between community

members. What appeared to be a tightly knit and homogeneous Acadian village to outsiders, actually harboured a number of serious linguistic, cultural and social cleavages. Chéticamp's ostensible collective determination to preserve a unique culture and French language was subject to different interpretations and varying degrees of commitment. In principle, the school was viewed as a vehicle of linguistic and cultural transmission, but in practice the quantity of French became the contentious issue that divided that consensus.

One of major thrusts of this study will be an examination of the community's social and economic stratification, its linguistic and religious components, the local leadership and the present educational system. An attempt also will be made to identify the conflict parties, its supporters, the contrasting positions with respect to language and cultural policies, possible motivations, the reasons that gave rise to the impasse, the nature of the struggle and its eventual resolution. Other fundamental questions to be addressed include the degree of "institutional completeness", which group(s) stood to benefit or lose as a result of the proposed educational changes and the role played by provincial political parties.

This study will also include a brief history of the Nova Scotian Acadians, the founding and development of Chéticamp and the evolution of the provincial educational system with an emphasis on the emergence of francophone language rights. The latter topic will be examined in three distinct periods: (1) 1766-1902; (2) 1902-1967; and (3) 1967-1986. In addition, the educational changes will be viewed in the historical context of the changing climate of linguistic acceptance at the national level as expressed by the Bi and Bi Commission of the 1960s, The impact of the Official Languages Act and the ramifications of recent judicial decisions based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Liberties will also be explored.

Of equal importance will be an analysis of the collective role played by francophone organizations at the national and provincial levels in the promotion of francophone interests. The Fédération des Francophones Hors Québec (F.F.H.Q), since its inception in 1976, has promoted francophone interests throughout Canada and worked closely with the respective provincial francophone associations. Their assistance and coordination of national strategy has been welcomed in particular by the francophone minorities that constitute a fraction of the overall population. On the provincial level, the relentless effort of the

Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (hereafter referred to as the F.A.N.E.) to maximize their influence at the provincial government level will also be investigated. A brief history of the F.A.N.E. will be outlined in order to explain the serious difficulties inherent in its tandem struggle to organize an effective government lobby group and to marshal Acadian support at the grass roots level. It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that the F.A.N.E., a nascent organization in 1969, focussed on education as a priority and considered the government bureaucracy and the apathy of the Acadian people as the two major obstacles to educational changes. Thus, an attempt will be made to determine the strategies that won government support, but which failed to gain the support of the majority of the Chéticamp Acadians.

Another dimension of the study will be an examination of the implications of the Canadian Charter in reference to the Nova Scotian Education Act. Subject to a liberal judicial interpretation, the Charter provides some radical changes vis-à-vis francophone minority education rights and control over their schooling. Recent court rulings in Ontario and Alberta have adjudicated in this particular vein and if these decisions are upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada, minority language rights could be radically

altered throughout Canada. In fact, Nova Scotia's Bill 65 might be placed in jeopardy because of a possible incompatibility with the Charter.

In recent times, the proliferation of immersion schools and a concomitant extension of linguistic services to French minorities across Canada indicates that current research in this area would be of national interest. (The term francophone, for the purpose of this study, refers to a French-speaking person, and conversely an anglophone is one who is English-speaking). Involved communities, parents, teachers, administrators and elected officials should be informed not only of the predictable resistance from anglophones to increased French usage in public schooling, but also the resistance from francophones themselves. Indeed, francophone organizations interested in enhancing their French presence in the public schooling should have the experiences of others to draw upon. Unlike most Canadian language disputes which pit anglophones against francophones, the present study reflects a serious demarcation of differences within the core of a francophone community. In effect, opposition to more French in the curriculum did not come from outside the community but from within their own ranks. The present case study replicates a situation that occurred at the opposite end of Nova Scotia

a few years earlier. It appears clear that many Acadians are reluctant to alter their present school proportions of French to English ratios for fear of losing their fluency in English and their consequent ability to compete in the job market. It is also clear that other areas such as St. Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba, have experienced the same reactions. If this observation is valid and not unique to Acadian areas, then the ramifications of this phenomenon would be potentially problematic for francophone organizations advocating change. Francophone groups that have erstwhile considered their only formidable opposition to be insensitive anglophone communities or governments, would also have to convince francophones of greater attention to French. It is interesting to note that if minor changes in the school curriculum could cause such a furor in a predominantly francophone community, what are the possibilities of establishing an all-French school. Consequently, the notions of cultural and institutional assimilation will be examined in order to determine the degree of anglicization in Chéticamp.

The last chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the "case study" from the local perspective as well as its significance in the larger Canadian context. The analysis will have two basic focii. The first, primarily historical,

will attempt to tie the separate historical events together. Because the present study appears to share similar characteristics with some antecedent cases in Nova Scotia and throughout Canada, the second focus will attempt to explain the dynamics of the "conflict" in a theoretical context and determine any general application beyond the community. Given the growing occurrence and increasing pressure for governments to extend further educational opportunities to francophones, the present research is both relevant and topical. It is hoped that the increased knowledge and understanding that should result from this study will facilitate the amelioration and continued implementation of similar programs.

The methodological approaches conducted in this study are essentially twofold. The first was a collection of data gleaned from primary and secondary sources such as books, articles, reports, newspaper accounts, editorials and letters to the editor. An examination of the R.C.B.B. report on education, the Secretary of State's Annual Reports and the Nova Scotia Annual Education Reports were extremely helpful in charting the changing climate of institutional opinion towards minority language rights. The second research approach involved a series of taped interviews with all the principal actors at the local,

municipal and provincial government levels. Department of Education officials were interviewed, as well as the political leader of the New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia, the school superintendent, the president of the F.A.N.E., et al. There were a total of thirteen interviews with most lasting a minimum of 90 minutes. The interview structure consisted of questions of the open and closed variety. Each respondent was asked a set of pre-arranged questions. Not all the questions were identical, but were tailored to the individual respondent. This procedure was followed by the solicitation of opinions and impressions about the "community conflict". Many of the comments, especially at the government level, were supplied on the condition that the person or source not be identified. This proviso reflects the sensitivity of the issue for certain individuals and the perceived need for anonymity. In the case of the two opposing groups in Chéticamp, the interviews were of a much longer duration and included follow-up phone conversations and correspondence. A total of ten interviews were conducted as well with parents and students who were not part of either official conflict groups. Again, the identical interview procedure was followed with certain adult oriented questions such as voting patterns, omitted from the student interviews.

Further, a number of impromptu conversations were held with local people in stores, restaurants and other public places in order to gather some random impressions from the local people. In addition, each major respondent supplied the writer with relevant documentation. Government sources provided copies of press releases, statements of policy and an outline of their involvement in the dispute. The two opposing Acadian groups provided association minutes or a record of their proceedings as well as their interpretation of the controversy. All the material supplied was cross-referenced for accuracy.

A questionnaire was circulated in the community in the hope that respondents would supply corraborative data for the study. Unfortunately, one of the major conflict groups, the Parents For Bilingualism, refused to fill out the questionnaires or to recommend this activity to their supporters because of their objections to certain questions. This refusal in itself, reflects the intensity and mistrust generated by the conflict, for identical questions were answered in the personal interview. Notwithstanding this obvious handicap, the questionnaire data provides some insights into how certain residents viewed the conflict over increased French content.

Chapter II

Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter aims to establish an historical framework in which the Acadian settlement, development and present day communities can be understood. The first part of the chapter will deal with historical events such as the early colonial settlement, the impact of the Acadian Expulsion of 1755 and the Founding of Chéticamp. The second part will examine the role of the Roman Catholic Church, the evolution of the Nova Scotia Educational System and the Rise of Acadian Nationalism.

Historical Background

The French colonization at Île Sainte-Croix in 1604 established what has been referred to as the French period of Nova Scotia history.(1) From 1604 until the first half of the eighteenth century Acadia (which included present day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island),(2) was to be the eastern outpost and military flank for both French and English in North America.(3) During this period Acadia was one of the many battlegrounds for the English-French struggle to achieve military and economic control of North America. The Treaty of Utrecht in

1713 marked the end of the French colonial rule in one part of Acadia that was later called Nova Scotia. Despite the establishment of the British presence, it wasn't until the founding of Halifax in 1749 that the British were actually in a position to exercise any military dominance. In the interlude, the French continued their military intrigues against the British, using Fort Beauséjour in present day New Brunswick and Louisbourg in Cape Breton as their bases of operations and depending on their Indian allies for support.

The Treaty of Utrecht ushered in an era of foreign control for the population of approximately 2,500 French inhabitants living in Nova Scotia (and who were referred to as Acadians).(4) The Treaty terms divided the former all French colonial territory in the following way: the peninsula of Nova Scotia became a British possession while Île Royale (Cape Breton), Île St. Jean (Prince Edward Island), Acadie (New Brunswick), and the rest of Canada remained under French control. Article 14 of the Treaty of Utrecht guaranteed the Acadians the right to leave, along with their possessions, or to stay under British rule with legal guarantees to their land and chattel property.(5) The majority of the Acadians were determined to leave Nova Scotia despite the loss of their farms but the "British

refused them permission to leave the territory."(6) Further, the British "did everything they could to stop any Acadian emigration."(7) It seems clear that the British policy of preventing Acadian emigration was motivated by economic reality rather that any military concerns. The departure of the Acadians would have left a population vacuum and the removal of a source of food, supplies and cheap labour for the British garrison. British efforts to entice English settlers had been largely unsuccessful for the "only English inhabitants were a few soldiers and merchants at Annapolis and Canso, augmented in the latter village by a transient fishing population."(8) This first act of geographical imprisonment was an omen of the precarious relationship that evolved between the Acadians and their British rulers.

Despite the Treaty of Utrecht's re-alignment of territorial boundaries in North America, France was not willing to succumb to British military hegemony. In 1716, the French fortress of Louisbourg was established on Île Royale.(9) Subsequently, the new French presence enticed the Acadians to leave Nova Scotia for tracts of promised free land in present day Cape Breton, and the opportunity to live under the protection of the French flag. Once again, the British literally blocked their paths and seized

their boats in order to stop the exodus.(10) Fears of economic loss of supplies and labour were the recurrent reasons that dictated the British policy.

During the period 1713-1755, the Acadians were mere pawns in the great European chess match. They were caught between their emotional, ancestral and patriotic loyalty to France and the harsh reality that England was their new legal ruler. France had abandoned them and England refused to let them leave Nova Scotia. They had little choice but to try to adjust to the political reality that the British were their new masters. The Acadians eventually earned the title of the "Neutral French" because of their lack of involvement in the incessant frontier clashes between the English and French military forces. J. Murray Beck writes that the "Acadians continued to be apathetic to political and military matters under the British masters as they had been under the French. They disregarded official regulations and maintained a form of rudimentary self-rule."(11)

Although the Acadian areas were remote and isolated they managed to establish an unofficial network of communication with the British. A number of Acadian emissaries were elected from each community and served the dual purpose of being a form of self-government and at the

same time being buffers between the Acadians and the British.(12) This network of representatives indicates that the British recognized the use of the French language, albeit out of necessity.

The founding of Halifax in 1749 marked a turning point in the political fortunes for the Acadians. The arrival of Governor Cornwallis with his 2,546 British settlers (13) placed the erstwhile indispensable Acadians in a vulnerable position. As a result, many Acadians attempted to escape from Nova Scotia before the threat of deportation became a reality. More than 3,000 Acadians evaded British naval blocades and escaped to Prince Edward Island from 1749-1755.(14) Furthermore, other Acadians "en nombre plus restreint, emigraient dans la région de Canso, au Cap-Breton."(15)

The situation in Nova Scotia must be understood in the context of the French-English struggle in North America. In 1754 these two powers were fighting for the control over the Ohio Valley and other areas of North America. At the same time European powers were re-aligning their positions on the European continent vis-à-vis their support for either England or France. Though this study will not analyze the activities and foreign policies of European nations, it should be noted that their combined intrigue

and political postures had a strong impact on colonial policy in America.

The capture of Forts Beauséjour and Gaspereau by the British in 1755 had severe consequences for the Acadians. The defeat of these French garrisons removed the last vestige of hope in the event of British aggression against them.

The Acadian Expulsion

The expulsion of the Acadians in 1755 has been the subject of much spirited and often emotional debate. Most Canadian school textbooks state that the Acadians were deported because they refused to take the "Oath of Allegiance" to the British Crown. George Rawlyk's report to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the mid-1960s subscribed to this thesis. He argued that "the refusal of the Acadians in 1755 to swear the oath of allegiance was the key factor in their being expelled by the British."(16) Notwithstanding this popular thesis, there are a number of historians who challenge this contention. One theory suggests that the decision to deport the Acadians was not predicated on the "oath" but rather on the desire to populate the Acadian farmlands with New England settlers.(17)

Whatever the British motivations, between 1755 and 1763 over 8,000 Acadians were uprooted from the various regions of Nova Scotia and scattered along the New England seaboard as far south as Louisiana as well as in other places on the globe.(18) The expulsion was followed by the British capture of Louisbourg in 1758 and a second deportation of the captured soldiers and the other Acadians in the region.(19) Many of the Acadians managed to escape deportation by fleeing into the wilderness where they were helped by friendly Indians; others moved to remore areas of the province only to be captured by pursuing British soldiers.(20)

The expulsion and subsequent period of Acadian exile has been well-documented. Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, the American author, chronicled the trials and tribulations of the Acadian exiles in his fictional poem "Evangeline". Whether by accident or design, some family members were separated forever, children were removed from their families to work in the New England homes, and religious practices were denied to the Acadians. Although this study will not detail the human tragedy of the Acadian expulsion and their subsequent struggles to return home, it should be noted that these traumatic experiences have affected their dealings with the British well into the twentieth century.

For example, the harrowing return journey on foot from New England to Nova Scotia became an integral part of their active oral history.

In 1764 the Acadians were allowed to resettle in Nova Scotia on the condition that they take the "unqualified oath of allegiance" and provided that they lived in small, isolated communities.(21)

The return journey for the Acadians took them to their former homesteads which were now "occupied by the sons of their conquerers".(22) In some cases, the Acadians managed to find work on their former properties but they now worked for the British owners.(23) Their arrival was fraught with emotion. "Some separated families were reunited. Some found a father, or a mother, a brother or a sister; others a husband or a wife, a son or a daughter ... after 13 years of separation."(24)

The Acadians chose to return to Nova Scotia for essentially two reasons: (1) Nova Scotia had been their home for well over one hundred years; and,(2) the hostile treatment received from the intolerant British, Protestant communities.(25) The Acadians resettled in the far extremities of the province. "Ils se dirigeront surtout vers la Baie Sainte-Marie et le Cap-Breton. C'est à ces endroits où, en grande partie, nous retrouverons leurs

descendants."(26) In effect, these two areas are the only places in the province which have successfully resisted English assimilation to the present day.

The Founding of Chéticamp

The island of Cape Breton, located in northwestern Nova Scotia, was annexed to the province in 1763, became a separate province in 1784, and in 1820 again became an integral part of Nova Scotia.(27) Since 1837, Cape Breton Island has been divided into the four counties of Cape Breton, Richmond, Victoria and Inverness.

Chéticamp is located in the northwestern corner of Cape Breton and within the jurisdiction of Inverness County. The area of Chéticamp, although a summer fishing centre for a number of years(28) was not inhabited on a permanent basis until the mid-1780s.(29) The first evidence of any year-round settlement was in 1782 when only two families were living there.(30) In 1785 and 1786 a group of Acadian exiles settled in the Chéticamp area because it was a place where "Ils pourraient enfin être chez eux ... ils n'y trouveraient pas d'anglais et ils y vivraient tranquilles."(31)

The village of Chéticamp was incorporated by the British Crown in 1790 and legal land titles were given to

the 26 Acadian families.(32) By 1879, the population had increased to 2,500 and it remained stationary for many years because of the outward migration to Québec, the United States and other parts of Cape Breton Island.(33)

Despite the fact that Chéticamp became a haven for Acadian exiles, there was an economic factor that played a prominent role in the growth of the village's population. As early as 1770, Jacques Robin, a Huguenot businessman and owner of a fishing company, had used Chéticamp as a summer fishing station.(34) Robin was from the Jersey and Guernsey Channel Islands and was in a unique position. He enjoyed British support because of his Protestant religion and pledge of loyalty and, at the same time, he shared a common language with the Acadians.(35) Consequently, the Robin's company, known locally as the Jersias,(36) was given permission to establish a year-round fishing station at Chéticamp and to employ as many Acadians as was deemed necessary.(37) The Acadians on the other hand, faced an economic dilemma. There was a dearth of fertile soil and financial resources to start even small agricultural projects. Therefore, they turned to the sea for their livlihood and to the Jersias in particular for employment.(38) For more than a century the Jersias were to exercise a monopoly over the fishing industry on the east

coast of Canada.(39) The entire lifeblood of Chéticamp was controlled by the Jersias. They paid the price they wanted for the fish, subjected Acadian fishermen to fourteen-hour work days and deplorable working conditions, and issued credit at the company store rather than pay them in cash.(40) Because the Jersias controlled all aspects of the economic life the Acadians were constantly in debt to them.

Although the Acadians were not fooled by this system of exploitation, they felt powerless to change it. They were "literally at the mercy of ther Jersias." (41) who owned the only dry goods store. Their frustrations and fears are reflected in a much celebrated incident where competing merchants had offered to pay twice the price that the Jersias paid for their fish. However, because only company workers were extended credit at the Jersias's store the local fishermen were afraid to sell their fish to other merchants. As a result, the Chéticamp fishermen refused to negotiate with the merchants "parce que des pêcheurs n'étaient pas libres de traiter avec elles".(42)

The Jersias' exploitation of the Chéticamp community continued until 1915 when the local fishermen formed the first fishermen's co-operative in North America.(43) This co-operative, inspired by the successful creation of a coal miner's co-operative in nearby Sydney, was established

without any outside involvement or influence.(44) The notion of co-operatives became a vital component of village life and by 1944 there was a co-operative credit union, store and lobster factory.(45) By the 1950s the fish plant was equipped to handle all stages of the fish production from the initial catch to the processing and the marketing of the products. (46) It should be noted that the Jersias fishing company and store continued after 1915 but its economic power diminished over the years. Today there is still a Robin's dry goods store/supermarket in Chéticamp but the community is committed to the notion of co-operativism in all its vital economic sectors.

The Role of the Catholic Church

Until recently, the Chéticamp population has been Acadian, Catholic and French.(47) Because of its isolation however, there were times, especially after 1755, when there was a scarcity of priests. The first priest took up residence at Chéticamp in 1801, but his religious duties also included a nearby community, as well as the distant Madelaine Islands.(48) The need for a full-time parish priest was considered essential as is revealed by the period correspondence between Chéticamp and Québec. For example, in the early 1800s there was an incessant flow of

requests sent to Québec for a full-time priest to minister to their spiritual needs. In 1812, Bishop Plessis of Québec described the religious fervour of the Chéticamp Acadians in the following manner

> ...la voix d'un prêtre, parmi eux, est aussi puissante que le serait celle d'une ange, parce qu'ils sont incapables de soupçonner qu'un prêtre puisse leur annoncer autre chose que la verité, ou exiger d'eux autre chose que ce que Dieu lui commande ... rien de plus ardent que leur désir d'avoir un prêtre qui puisse hiverner chez eux, ou du moins y passer plusieurs mois de suite.(49)

Despite the obvious bias of this position, it seems clear that priests enjoyed a privileged position in Chéticamp. Most of them were tireless selfless workers whose altruism earned the respect and admiration of the people. The parish priest was the spiritual, political and educational leader in the community. In essence, the role of the local priest was simil ar to the one played by the Québec priests in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The priest wielded considerable power and was involved in virtually every aspect of community life. For example, in the 1860s, Father Hubert Girgoir was responsible for such diverse projects as the construction of two schools and the procurement of government funding for the widening the Chéticamp harbour.(50) In the annals of local clerical history, however, the achievements of

Father Pierre Fiset are unparalleled. Fiset served from 1875 to 1909 and was directly responsible for the following accomplishments:

1) the construction of the present day Saint-Pierre Church;

2) the recruitment and settlement of a teaching and nursing order of sisters called "les Filles de Jesus";

3) the organization and construction of several local schools.(51)

Two of Fiset's greatest preoccupations were the cause of Acadian education and the protection of French culture. Consequently he fought "... à sauver les Acadiens de l'Anglicisation."(52)

Father Fiset was the first priest to recognize that if Chéticamp was to become a strong, viable community it had to overcome the economic stranglehold exercised by the Jersias. Fiset's unilateral, undaunted determination to destroy the Jersias' fishing monopoly and their control over the village is legendary and a symbol of inspiration to this day. Fiset's initial conversation with an executive of the Jersias company reveals his sense of mission and tenacity. "Je veux consacrer ma vie à vous chasser. J'ai telle somme d'argent à y mettre et si cela me suffit pas, je peux en avoir d'autre."(53) Fiset's threats were not groundless for he had the money and village support to pose

a serious problem for the Jersias. Between 1888 and 1905 he engineered the acquisition of a store for the sale of fish and meat products, built two wharves and purchased a lobster factory, as well as a big farm with barns and a herd of cattle.(54) Fiset's foray into agricultural pursuits was a lesson for the local residents whose whole world revolved around the fishing industry. His hope for economic diversification and community collective action was embraced by the community. Before Fiset's retirement in 1909, he spearheaded a co-operative venture in the mining industry, and secured regular steamship and railway services between Chéticamp and Pictou, Nova Scotia.(55)

Father Patrice Le Blanc followed Fiset as parish priest in 1909 but never measured up to his predecessor's gargantuan accomplishments. He did, nonetheless, promote the notion of an all-French community and the need for a good bilingual education for Acadian children. "Thanks to his efforts the Post Office decided to recognize the French names for the various French-speaking communities instead of the English equivalents."(56). Since Le Blanc's retirement in 1953, Chéticamp has been under the spiritual guidance of the Eudist Fathers.(57) Unfortunately, there is a paucity of written history on this recent period.

Acadian Education (1766-1902)

The settlement of Halifax in 1749 strengthened the power of the British and swelled the ranks of their mostly Anglican population. The Nova Scotia government responded to this new Anglican presence by giving the Church of England complete control over provincial public education. The Education Act of 1766 also gave the Anglican Church the licensing authority for all the grammar school teachers.(58) Moreover, it was decided that

> "... if any popish recursant, papist or persons professing the popish religion shall be presumptious as to set up any school within this province, and be detected therein, such offender shall, for every such offence, suffer three months imprisonment without bail or mainprize, and shall pay a fine to the King of ten pounds."(59)

It is doubtful that this educational restriction had a serious negative impact on Acadian education for the Acadians were too busy trying to survive to be concerned about educational matters. The Act does, however, reflect the colonial government's intolerance towards Catholic schooling and Catholic teachers. Despite the prohibition of Catholic schools, lessons were taught in "private or secret, given in barns, the backs of houses, and so on."(60) Subsequent legislation in 1786 removed most of the restrictions placed upon separate Catholic education.

Again, these changes had little impact on the Acadian areas because the lack of priests and the more immediate concerns for resettlement problems precluded educational considerations.(61)

Between 1799 and 1841 there were "few educational advances in the Acadian community in Cape Breton and in the Tracadie region."(62) Other than rudimentary reading and writing, sponsored by the parish priest or a few itinerant teachers, very little teaching was taking place in the Chéticamp area.(63) Government Acts of 1826, 1828 and 1832 were of no assistance to the Acadians. These acts provided funds for local schools on the condition that the residents built their own schools and guaranteed a minimum annual salary of £50 to each teacher.(64) Although some school construction took place during the 1830s, most Acadian communities were too poor to build any.(65)

Despite the lack of government funding and trained teachers, some progress was made under less than ideal conditions. The following description reveals both the dedication and difficulty faced by teachers and students in the classroom:

> Jusqu'ici, il n'existait aucun programme scolaire officiel. Aucune compétence de la part des professeurs n'était exigée par la loi. Aucun horaire non plus. Tout était laissé au jugement ou au caprice des professeurs d'occasion. À

> Chéticamp, les professeurs les péchaient [sic] plutôt par zèle. La classe commencait tôt le matin et continuait toute la journée, sans récréation aucune, jusqu'à la brunante le soir. Le seul arrêt était pour le dîner. Et il n'y avait pas de vacances durant l'année, pas même l'été.(66)

Acadians greeted the Education Act of 1841 as a progressive piece of legislation designed to promote minority language rights. This act "authorized government grants to Catholic schools where French (or German or Gaelic for that matter) might be the language of instruction,"(67) in addition to an equal amount of public funds as the English schools.(68) These new privileges did not last long, however, "since the province set up non-denominational public school system in 1864, making it compulsory and universal the following year."(69)

By 1864, it was clear the provincial government had changed its mind about the legitimacy of more than one language of school instruction. The Act provided for the following changes:

1) a uniform, province-wide English educational system was established with a uniform curriculum and textbooks;

2) an inspectorate with a provincial network of inspectors;

3) the establishment of a Teachers' Normal School;

4) the licensing of teachers;

5) the removal of religious instruction from the schools.(70)

These measures were considered necessary if the province was to guarantee the primacy of English. In fact, the use of French instruction was viewed as a temporary nuisance by the Charles Tupper government.(71) The Acadian response to these regulations was a mixture of chagrin and the resolve to ignore the language prohibition. Their perspective is reflected in the following manner:

> Malheureusement, par cette loi, l'anglais devenait non seulment obligatoire mais la seule langue permise dans toutes les écoles. Le français n'était toléré qu'à partir du neuvième degré et encore qu'à titre facultatif. L'enseignement de la religion ne serait toléré durant les heures de classes que sur le consentement unanime des parents. Pour les Acadiens de la province c'était le glas des libertés scolaires acquises: leur langue et leur foi étaient en danger. Enfin, on établissait le régime de l'inspectorat unilingue et anglais naturellement.(72)

Theoretically, French was eliminated, except as an optional subject after grade nine, and certification regulations made it impossible to import teachers from the religious orders of French Canada.(73) Nonetheless, Government efforts to establish a unilingual English school system were ineffectual in Acadian areas because of the lack of bilingual teachers. Despite English textbooks and

instructions, instruction was still carried out in the medium of French.(74) In fact, the Christian Brothers promoted the use of French. "Ils enseignaient à la fois l'anglais et à la fois le français mais accordaient une plus large place à la langue française ... ces frères donnaient leurs cours dans l'école publique et firent dans cette paroisse un bien immense au point de vue du français."(75)

The major thrust of the 1864 Act and its subsequent amendments was to punish communities that circumvented the new regulations. Although the educational changes had severe consequences for Acadians in "mixed communities", the major French regions were unaffected.(76) While some schools were forced to close because of lack of government funding, most of the French instruction went unchecked.(77) "Quand au français, on continua de l'enseigner en marge de la loi . On se servait des syllabaires des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes et de la série des livres de lecture de A.-N. Montpetit."(78) Legally, the French teachers could not be certified by the province because they could not speak English--a requirement to teach. On a daily basis however, the Acadian schools functioned as they always did.

Acadian attempts to have French reinstated as a language of instruction failed. As noted, the teachers and students were unilingually French and conversely the

textbooks and school inspectors were unilingually English. On the other hand the inspectors "bien qu'Anglais et protestants ... surent tempérer l'injustice de la loi par leur largeur de vues et leur esprit de tolérance.(79)

Acadian efforts to enlist the support of the Roman Catholic Church were equally unsuccessful. "The Catholic hierarchy was more concerned with the general question of the legal status of parochial schools than with the particular needs of the Acadian people."(80) Eventually, an agreement was concluded between Premier Charles Tupper and Archbishop Connolly of Halifax. Connolly accepted all the terms of the 1864 educational bill in return for the guarantee that the Council of Public Education "would always contain Roman Catholics and therefore Catholic interests would be safeguarded."(81) It appears that Connolly was more concerned with protecting the rights of the majority of Irish Catholics than in taking up the defense of the Acadian linguistic rights.

Nova Scotia's entry into Confederation in 1867 presented the possibility of greater French status for the Acadians because it included French-speaking Quebec as a major partner. However, any hope of French Canadian support for minority language rights was illusory. A.I. Silver writes that

> For a great many French Canadians, the last known fact about the Acadians was the expulsion ... Whether the continued existence of the Acadians was known to the French Canadians or not, they were virtually ignored by them when it came to guaranteeing minority rights in Confederation. At the Québec Conference, the first draft of the resolution dealing with education (perhaps prepared and certainly approved by the French-Canadian ministers) simply said that education would be a provincial jurisdiction, and provided no guarantees for minority school rights. It was an English-speaking Lower Canadian, McGee, who proposed an amendment the next day to provide guarantees-but only for the Catholic and Protestant minorities of Upper and Lower Canada, and not for the other provinces.(82)

Although it is not the intention of this paper to analyze the rationale of French-Canada's position, it is clear that French-speaking people outside Québec received no linguistic rights from Confederation. Section 93 of the British North America Act made education an exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Consequently, after 1867 provincial efforts to assimilate the Acadians accelerated. In 1879, provincial legislation changed the school boundary districts. Up until this date the Acadian schools were considered as one single district. Now each Acadian area in the south west was "paired with an English speaking area ... as a result the particular importance of each school district was much lessened".(83)

As noted, the Acadians resisted assimilation and were

helped by their geographic isolation, the reluctance of French teachers to learn English and the sympathetic English school inspectors. In fact, this latter group " recognized the need for French teachers to teach in their native tongue."(84) Between 1864 and 1902 the annual reports from most of the inspectors called for bilingual texts.(85) Finally, in 1882 a bilingual text was introduced for the first five grades, but because French was on one side of the page and the English translation on the opposite side they were considered largely ineffective.(86) It is interesting to note that the development of Acadian schools in Cape Breton was ignored in the official education reports for the identical period.(87)

Nova Scotian Educational Policy (1902-1967)

In 1902, the Nova Scotia government established an "Acadian Commission for the expressed purpose of investigating the best methods of teaching English in French districts of the province..."(88) Nova Scotia's increased intolerance of the use of French in the school system was similar to resistance towards French usage in the public schools outside Québec. As previously noted, because of a lack of constitutional guarantees, separate French schools outside Québec became a political matter to

be decided by provincial governments. Two celebrated cases, involving the majority of francophones outside Québec, exemplify this intolerance. For example, Manitoba unconstitutionally removed the official status of French in 1890, and this situation was not rectified until a recent Supreme Court decision. Bilingual English-French schools were, however, allowed in the province until 1916. Ontario also restricted the use of French instruction with their Regulation 17 in 1912. In other cases French instruction was confined to the first year of school or restricted as a language of study. Additionally, "The First World War added patriotic to economic arguments for the exclusive study of English, but long before 1914 it was clear that bilingualism in any form had a limited future in the West."(89) In any case, as far as French schools were concerned no provincial constitution gave them legal status until a very recent date.

In sum, it appears that Nova Scotia was part of a national movement to maintain English as the only school language. Nonetheless, attempts to assimilate the Acadians had not worked. The government consequently, revised their approach to this problem, but not their overall aim. Indeed, the 1902 Acadian Commission's explicit mandate was to develop a strategy to promote English in the Acadian

schools. Following are some of the major recommendations that were implemented:

1) French was made the legal language of instruction for grades one through four;

2) English was to be taught orally for the first four grades, after which it was to become the sole language of instruction;

3) a series of French readers would be used for the first four grades;

4) a bilingual summer course was established at the Truro Normal School;

5) a new inspectorate was set up for the Acadian schools.(90)

A perusal of the 1902 changes demonstrates that this new program was as fundamentally flawed as the one in 1864. Despite the acceptance of French as a language of instruction, the notion that French could be taught for grades one through four, outlawed for grades five through eight, and then reinstated as an optional course was ludicrous. Furthermore, no bursaries were allocated as an incentive for French teachers to become bilingual. Consequently, the Acadians circumvented the regulations and "... they continued to use French beyond grade six".(91)

Between 1902 and 1939 the Acadians protested against the unworkable regulations. They petitioned, complained, and tried many non-violent methods of demonstration but

their grievances were not addressed. George Rawlyk and Ruth Hafter argued that "Official indifference was to be the response to many other Acadian petitions."(92)

The present school system took its general shape and framework from a program of studies for public schools established in 1939. Once again, there was not real change of heart on the part of the provincial government regarding the role of French in Acadian schools (this change would not come until 1981). In effect, important recommendations affecting French education are cited below:

> 1) all the regular school subjects in grades one through six inclusive were to be taught in French;
>
> 2) in grades seven through nine inclusive instruction in language and literature would be given in French and English;
>
> 3) the textbooks in history would be in French and all other textbooks would be in English. Teachers were given the liberty to teach in either language;
>
> 4) in grades ten through twelve the prescribed textbooks would be the same as those prescribed for the English-speaking students.(93)

These tolerant recommendations were a breath of fresh air for the Acadians who wanted a school system that would help them preserve their language and culture. However, the initial euphoria soon dissipated when the provincial government decided not to accept all the new proposals. Indeed, in 1941, the amended Acadian school regulations

stated that "in the new programme French and English are taught concurrently in all the grades, and that English would become the sole medium of instruction beginning with grade IX."(94) In effect, the Acadians viewed this stipulation as a retrogressive measure because it effectively eliminated the previous system of French instruction in grades one through four, established in 1902. The so-called positive aspects of the program also ran into problems. The notion of French textbooks was a move in the right direction, but as late as 1960 "the only prescribed books for each grade still remained a reader and a grammar."(95) In other words, a student could learn to read in French but was not given other books with which to develop his/her skills. Furthermore, the summer school course for bilingual teachers was abandoned in 1946 because no teaching credit was offered for the program and no provincial bursary was offered as an incentive for Acadian teachers.(96)

Few major educational changes occurred in the Acadian program between 1939 and 1981. However, there were some revisions of the French language syllabus and curriculum in 1953 and 1960 respectively. For example, French was reinstated as the sole language of instruction for grades one through six, and students were allowed to take History

or Canada Studies in French as an elective subject in grades seven through twelve. Also, at the provincial level, the position of a superintendent of Acadian Studies was established in 1975.

The Rise of Acadian Nationalism

The year 1800 ushered in an exciting era of unprecedented political and nationalist activity for the Acadians in the Maritimes. In that year Acadian delégations journeyed to Québec city for the annual convention of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste.(97) This meeting with fellow francophones seemed to ignite the flame of Acadian nationalism. In the subsequent years the Acadians chose a national feast day, adopted their own patron saint, selected an Acadian flag, and chose their own national anthem.(98) By 1885, a national Acadian society had been formed with the expressed aim of "retaining their language and customs."(99) It is important to note that Acadians made it perfectly clear that their "identity" was separate and different from the francophones of Québec. Moreover, an Acadian convention in 1890 outlined their language policy that continues to the present day. The assembled group of approximately 6,000 people felt

qu'il est désirable que dans toutes nos écoles soit

> primaires, soit secondaires, académies ou collèges, covents ou pensionnats, la langue anglaise soit enseignée concurrent [sic] avec la langue française, mais que le français soit, autant que possible la langue de l'enseignement.(100)

In the same year the first Acadian post-secondary institution, Collège Ste-Anne was founded at Church Point (Pointe de L'Église). Collège Ste-Anne was staffed by Eudist fathers and was given the legal right to grant degrees in 1893.(101) Since the 1930s each Acadian community had energetic and active home and school associations which promoted bilingual education. In 1948, a number of historical societies were established with the primary goal of conserving the French language, culture and education. Nonetheless, it wasn't until 1968 that a provincial association of Acadians, sponsored by the federal government, was formed.

Conclusion

With the exception of the indigenous Indians, the Acadians have the longest historical roots of any group in Nova Scotia. Their ancestors lived under both the French and British colonial regimes, experienced deportation to English Protestant communities, and following more than a decade of exile returned to their homeland. Restricted to

remote isolated areas, the Acadians adjusted to life under British rule. The communities evolved as discrete semi-independent entities with limited contact with other Acadians, as well as with English-speaking inhabitants.

The village of Chéticamp developed as a fishing centre controlled by the Jersias company . Eventually, Chéticamp led by Father Pierre Fiset, was able to destroy the monopolistic power of the Jersias and begin a tradition of co-operative ventures in most community spheres.

In the education arena, the succeeding English-speaking provincial governments attempted to assimilate the Acadian population through a series of school programs. French instruction in Acadian schools was outlawed, discouraged and eventually tolerated, but never encouraged. The failure to assimilate the Acadians was due to their isolation, a tenacity to retain their French language and culture and government inability to put in place institutions or programs where Acadian teachers could learn English.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the Nova Scotia Acadians adhered to a separate identity with a common flag, patron saint, national anthem and a collective resolve to promote the French language and retain their own culture. This identity was expressed in their advocacy of bilingual

Acadian schools and their determination to lobby the provincial government until this aim was achieved.

Footnotes (Chapter II)

1) George A. Rawlyk and Ruth Hafter, Acadian Education in Nova Scotia: An Historical Survey to 1965 (Ottawa: Crown Copyrights, 1970), p.2.

2) Although there is some debate over the origin of the term "Acadia", recent research indicates that it is a corruption of the classic name Arcadia. International treaties referred to the area as "Acadie or Nova Scotia" as early as 1621. In this year Sir William Alexander was granted Colonization rights and employed exclusively the name Nova Scotia.

3) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.2.

4) Ibid, p.5.

5) Anselme Chiasson, Chéticamp: histoire et traditions Acadiennes (Moncton: Éditions des Aboiteaux, 1972), p.14.

6) George Frederick Clarke, The True Story of the Expulsion of the Acadians (New Brunswick: University Press of New Brunswick, 1955), p.10.

7) Ibid, p.11.

8) Arthur Doughty, The Acadian Exiles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p.32.

9) Ibid.

10) Ibid, p.33.

11) Claude Sheppard-Armand, The Law of Language in Canada (Ottawa: Crown Copyrights, 1971), p.5.

12) Ibid, p.8.

13) Ibid, p.9.

14) Chiasson, op cit, p.15.

15) Ibid.

16) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.5.

17) Clarke, op cit, p.11.

18) Chiasson, op cit, p.16.

19) Ibid.

20) Pascal Poirier, Des Acadiens déportés à Boston en 1755 (Ottawa: La Société Royale du Canada, 1909), p.147-151. For additional information on theories concerning the "Expulsion" consult George Clarke (op cit) and Robert Rumilly's L'Acadie Anglaise (pp.328-340).

21) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.5.

22) Poirier, op cit, pp.160-170.

23) Isaiah W. Williams, A Geography and History of the County of Digby (Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), p.29.

24) Ibid, p.30.

25) Antoine Bernard, Histoire de la Survivance Acadienne (Montreal: Emmanuel-Alphonse, 1935), p.227.

26) Poirier, op cit, p.165.

27) Chiasson, op cit, p.9. According to Chiasson the name Cheticamp is derived from a Micmac word Aotjatotj which means "rarement plein" , p. 21.

28) Ibid, pp. 29-30.

29) Ibid.

30) Ibid, p.35.

31) Ibid.

32) Ibid, p.31.

33) Ibid, p.35.

34) Ibid, p.72.

35) Ibid, p.73.

36) Ibid.

37) Ibid.

38) Michel Roy, L'Acadie: des origines à nos jours (Québec: Éditions Québec Amérique, 1981), p.153.

39) Chiasson, op cit, p.75.

40) Ibid.

41) Ibid, p.74.

42) Chiasson, op cit, p.75.

43) Ibid, p.79.

44) Ibid.

45) Ibid, p.84.

46) Ibid.

47) Ibid, (Consult section "La vie religieuse" pp. 109-157.)

48) Ibid, p.111.

49) Ibid, p.114.

50) Ibid, p. 142.

51) Ibid, p.142.

52) Ibid, p.143.

53) Ibid.

54) Ibid, p.147.

55) Ibid.

56) Ibid.

57) Ibid, p.152.

58) Ibid, p.152.

59) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.6.

60) A.I. Silver, The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation: 1964-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p.8.

61) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.5.

62) Ibid, p.6.

63) Ibid, p.8.

64) Ibid.

65) Ibid.

66) Chiasson, op cit, p.163.

67) Silver, op cit, p.9.

68) Ibid.

69) Ibid.

70) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.14.

71) Ibid.

72) Chiasson, op cit, p.163.

73) Silver, op cit, p.10.

74) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit.

75) Ibid, p.10.

76) Ibid, p.12.

77) Ibid.

78) Chiasson, op cit, p.160.

79) Ibid, p.164.

80) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.15.

81) Ibid, p.17.

82) Silver, op cit, pp.53-54.

83) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.16.

84) Ibid.

85) Ibid, p.17.

86) Ibid.

87) Ibid, p.18.

88) Ibid, p.29.

89) J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet. Canadian Education: A History. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1970, p.287. For further information concerning the state of French language instruction in the English provinces see Chapters Three and Sixteen.

90) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, 105.

91) Ibid.

92) Ibid, p.33.

93) Ibid, p.36.

94) Ibid.

95) Ibid, p.70.

96) Ibid.

97) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.18.

98) Ibid.

99) Ibid.

100) Bernard, op cit, p.263.

101) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.19.

Chapter III

The Evolution of Federal Language Policy

Introduction

The major thrust of this chapter will be a brief examination of the salient linguistic and legal developments at the federal government level (between 1967 and 1985) which have influenced and shaped contemporary language policies. In particular, an attempt will be made to explain the changing climate of opinion vis-à-vis the French language as shown by concessions adopted by federal and provincial governments. The chapter's second focii will be an assessment of Nova Scotian Acadian education as portrayed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism report (R.C.B.B.) in 1970. The topics which warrant attention are the following: the R.C.B.B.; the Commission of Official Languages; the Role of the Fédération des Francophones Hors Québec; Federal-Provincial Conferences; the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; recent Judicial Decisions and the R.C.B.B.'s report on Acadian Education.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism

In the 1970s and 1980s an attitude of official tolerance towards French became apparent at the federal and

some provincial government levels. The genesis of this new tolerance can be traced back to the early 1960s and the federal government's concerns with the rapid changes in Québec during the Quiet Revolution. In concert with the economic and educational reforms in Québec society was a more assertive attitude towards the federal government.

> The Union Nationale under Daniel Johnson ... took an even stronger stand for greater provincial autonomy and for French and English equality throughtout Canada. Others outside the government took a more extreme position, arguing that Québec's demands would never be met by Canada, independence being the only answer.(1)

The extent of the growing discontent in Québec was particularly alarming to Prime Minister Lester Pearson and his federal Liberal government which favoured bilingualism and biculturalism.(2) Consequently, a Royal Commission to study English-French relations in Canada was set up by the Pearson government in 1963. As a result, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism report, an exhaustive six volume analysis of the state of Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism, became the catalytic agent for radical changes in federal government linguistic and cultural policy.

The "raison d'être" of the R.C.B.B. was "to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian

Confederation on the basis of equal partnership between the two founding races."(3) The most significant outcome of the commission was the Official Languages Act of 1969 which formally declared French and English the official languages of the Parliament of Canada, of the federal court, and the federal administration. Furthermore, a Commissioner of Official Languages was appointed to ensure the recognition of the two languages.(4) Although the Official Languages Act did not contain implementation or monitoring mechanisms, its Commissioner's annual reports contained a detailed analysis of Canadian linguistic and cultural developments, a critique of federal government performance, and recommendations. In other words, the Commissioner became the "watchdog" over the entire federal apparatus from Parliament to the Crown corporations.

Canada entered the 1970s as an officially bilingual nation but the newly entrenched language rights did not extend to provincial jurisdictions.(5) In effect, Section 93 of the British North America Act made education the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, subject to certain conditions.(6) Therefore, provincial government decisions to extend bilingual services were largely based on moral persuasion or appeals to linguistic equity rather than any legal compulsion.

Volume II of the R.C.B.B. contained a detailed analysis of the provincial educational systems with a particular focus on the treatment of the official language minority and second language education. The promotion and preservation of linguistic and cultural identity permeated the report. "Equal partnership in education implies equivalent educational opportunities for Francophones and Anglophones alike, whether they belong to the majority or the minority of the province."(7) The logical extension of this principle was the need for provincial governments to provide minority-language schools. The R.C.B.B. writes that

> If the majority language is the sole language of instruction in the provincial schools, the survival of the minority language is menaced. Almost by definition a minority is exposed to a social environment in which the majority language is always present. The school must counterbalance this environment and must give priority to the minority language if the mother tongue is to become an adequate instrument of communication.(8)

Additional recommendations reinforced the notion that the mother tongue should be the language of instruction and that the federal government should pay the costs incurred from these changes.(9) Furthermore, the policy of minority-language schools should "apply with equal force to all regions of the country"(10) and that "the study of the second official language should be obligatory for all

students in Canadian schools."(11) The right of parental choice in having children educated in the mother tongue was also suggested.(12)

On one crucial aspect of minority language schooling the R.C.B.B. was ambiguous. Despite the advocacy of a "minority controlled school", the possibility of a mixed or bilingual school was permitted.(13) Further, it was stated that "although there was not outright denial of access to it [school], special measures will be required to ensure that the language problems of those children whose mother tongue is the language of instruction is not impaired."(14)

Legally, the ramifications of these aforementioned recommendations could have had a profound effect on the bilingual education programs in Canada, but few of the principles were adopted by any of the provinces.

The Role of Francophone Associations

The R.C.B.B.'s reports revealed that francophones outside of Québec were victims of increasing assimilation and their very survival as a linguistic community was in danger. Coupled with their fight for survival was a serious identity crisis. The francophones were alienated from Québec by distance and tradition, and at the same time they

were not accepted as integral members of the anglophone communities. "On the other hand, their English-speaking neighbours tend to ignore them, tell them to assimilate, or warn them to at least not ask more than 'other' local ethnic groups."(15) The Secretary of State's decision to place francophones under the rubric of ethnic groups tended to undermine their position as members of the two founding societies.(16) This feeling of isolation and political impotence by francophones throughout Canada motivated Ottawa "in 1968 to give French-speaking communities political priority and leadership. It offically recognized and financially encouraged their provincial associations..."(17) Consequently, provincial associations such as La Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (the F.A.N.E.), emerged as strong pressure groups and lobbyied their respective provincial governments for educational reforms pursuant to the minority language recommendations of the R.C.B.B. The combined efforts of provincial francophone associations and the Secretary of State brought about the creation of a national francophone organization called La Fédération des Francophones Hors Québec in 1976 (hereafter referred to as the F.F.H.Q.).(18) With federal government funding and encouragement, the F.F.H.Q. pursued its goal of equal access to bilingual

education and services throughout Canada. The F.F.H.Q. attracted linguistic allies from non-francophones as well. In 1976, a group of parents formed an association called the Canadian Parents for French.(19) This pressure group of over 2,000 members and with chapters in most Canadian cities, became a strong proponent of greater accessibility to French immersion programs, and focussed on the need for French education in general.(20)

In 1977 and 1978 the F.F.H.Q. published two books entitled Les Héritiers de Lord Durham and Deux Poids, Deux Mesures respectively, which outlined the unfair treatment of francophones in English Canada.(21) These studies were a scathing critique of provincial government reluctance to recognize minority language rights. Consequently, the F.F.H.Q. employed some modern lessons of politicization--national conferences were held, publicity campaigns were launched and political lobbying was conducted to argue their case for better linguistic programs. Max Yalden, when he was Commissioner pointed out that "The French-language minority has put together an increasingly militant organization to work and push for these rights which the majority have been so reluctant to grant on its own accord."(22)

By the end of 1979, groups such as the Canadian

Teachers' Association, the Canadian Bar Association, and the Task Force on Canadian Unity had endorsed the need for a legal entrenchment of minority language rights.(23) However, despite the stimulative use of federal funds and resources, few provinces seemed willing to stop the wave of assimilation.(24) The Commissioner of Official Languages asserted that "the only logical and long term solution is the establishment of Francophone school districts which would guarantee reasonable control over their own system."(25) With this objective in mind, the francophone associations in Nova Scotia, Alberta and Saskatchewan submitted formal proposals to their respective provincial governments in 1980.(26)

In the early 1980s the F.F.H.Q. and their provincial counterparts focussed their attention on the inherent assimilation dangers of mixed or bilingual schools. In essence, it was argued that bilingual or immersion schooling is designed for the anglophone student who is learning French as a second language, rather than the francophone student who comes from a French environment. The placement of anglophones and francophones in the same classes presented two serious problems. First, the unique medium of French instruction was delayed until the anglophones acquired linguistic competency. Second, the

language of communication between the students became English because the francophones were bilingual. Despite the concerted opposition of the francophone associations, these mixed schools "are still the norm in most provinces outside Québec."(27) The Canadian Teachers' Federation referred to mixed schools as "assimilation factories"(28) and the Commissioner of Official Languages concurred with this view.(29) This contentious issue has recently been submitted to the courts for a judicial interpretation.(30) Paradoxically, in part, the problem was due to the rising popularity of immersion schools and other second-language programs at a time when federal financial assistance was decreasing. When federal funding was frozen in 1979,(31) provincial governments also reduced the second language program spending, or allocated their funds differently. The Commissioner of Official Languages reported in 1981 that "a larger proportion of the money is going every year to support French second-language education for anglophone students and a progressively smaller share is finding its way into support for francophones studying in their first language."(32)

Commissioner of Official Languages

Since 1969, the successive Commissioners of Official

Languages have scrutinized the institutional bilingualism of federal government agencies, supported francophone associations and advocated viable second-language programs throughout Canada. One Commissioner referred to "the teaching of second-languages in Canada as a national disaster ...[and]... a country-wide catastrophe."(33) However, for jurisdiction reasons, most educational complaints were channelled to the respective provincial agencies.(34)

In the early 1970s, the Commission of Official Languages concentrated its efforts on the delivery of federal government bilingual services throughout Canada.(35) In addition, the Commission championed the cause of francophone associations and pushed the federal government to give them more financial assistance.(36) Because minority groups depended on financial aid from the federal government for their continued existence, it was imperative that adequate budgeting be guaranteed. Furthermore, the Commissioner of Official Languages encouraged Ottawa "to bring pressure through both incentives and eventual condemnation, on provincial governments who fail to treat their French-speaking communities fairly."(37) Nevertheless, there is little evidence to suggest that this strategy was effective in shaping significant language

reforms; as late as 1985 universal access to minority language schools was still denied in most anglophone provinces.(38) Several provincial governments, however, enacted some minor language reform measures. The most significant event was New Brunswick's unilateral decision to declare French and English as official languages.(39) Indeed, the first francophone law school in Canada (offering English Common Law) was also established in New Brunswick.(40) Ontario, although avoiding its nemisis of official bilingualism, designated sixteen bilingual areas and granted the right to a criminal trial in English or French.(41) British Columbia implemented a new French elementary program; Manitoba instituted a new comprehensive program for French language education; and an Albertan university added some French courses to its extension program.(42) By 1980, the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick, Québec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island had legislation guaranteeing access, subject to various restrictions, to minority language education. Alberta had legislation that permitted instruction in French, while in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland there were no measures beyond local policies and traditions.(43)

Despite the improvements to second language programs in recent years, the struggle for minority language rights

has met strong opposition outside Québec. The level of educational services available to the French-speaking minority in the anglophone provinces is far inferior to the rights enjoyed by the English minority in Québec.(44) The fight for language rights seems hinged on a need for a radical attitudinal change. The Commissioner reported in 1978 that "The majority of English-speaking persons consider Francophones to be asking for a special, privileged status within society; they think the Francophones are getting the 'bigger end of the stick' when it comes to government services and education".(45)

Federal-Provincial Conferences

Since 1971, the notion of minority-language education rights has been debated at the federal-provincial conferences. By 1977, all the provinces agreed to guarantee the right to minority language education.(46) Furthermore, each province undertook a study of its own educational system and submitted a report in 1978.(47) Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau argued that "the only way to ensure the right of Canadians to education in the official language of their choice was to entrench this right in the Constitution."(48) The premiers had agreed that they would

do their best to offer French to the French-speaking minority where the numbers were justified.(49) Although the definition of "justifiable numbers" was a debatable point, the notion of French linguistic rights was accepted in principle. The 1978 federal-provincial constitutional conference nonetheless, failed to receive unanimity on the "minority languages" issue. Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Ontario and Saskatchewan seemed prepared to accept constitutional guarantees which would include a clause on the language of education, while the other provinces were either reluctant to commit themselves or downright opposed."(50)

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The new Canadian Constitution (which came into effect in April 1982) legally enshrined minority language rights, as expressed in Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Prior to the Charter, language rights in Canada, within the federal jurisdiction, were confined to section 133 of the British North America Act of 1867, section 23 of the Manitoba Act of 1870, simil ar provisions contained in the original Northwest Territories Act and the Official Languages Act of 1969.(51) Unlike the previous

pieces of legislation, Section 23 of the Canadian Charter guarantees the right of French or English as the language of school instruction, subject to certain conditions. The implications of their "rights" have special significance for official language groups who wish to have their children educated in their mother tongue. Following is the legal text that governs the new minority language education rights:

> Section 23.(1) Citizens of Canada
>
> (a)whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or
>
> (b)who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or the French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.
>
> (2)Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.
>
> (3)The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province
>
> (a)applies wherever in the province the number of

> children of citizens who have such a right is sufficent to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and
>
> (b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.(52)

Although it is not the intention of this study to attempt a legal analysis of the possible judicial interpretations of Section 23 of the Charter, it is imperative to examine its significant implications. The four major points which warrant explanation are the following:

1) any Canadian citizen who is a parent and satisfies one of three conditions found in subsections 23(1) or 23(2) can exercise his/her right to minority language education;

2) it is the language of the parent and not the child which is the compelling requirement. In the past, a child was denied "the opportunity to receive minority language instruction if that child was not presently functional in that language."(53) Conceivably, a unilingual English-speaking child could now study in French if his/her parent is qualified pursuant to Section 23;

3) the right to a minority language instruction applies anywhere in the province where there are sufficent numbers;

4) there is a right to "receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities..."(23)(2b)

Because the Charter lacks a set of criteria to explain these four points unequivocally, their interpretation

resides ultimately with the judicial system.

Ontario Supreme Court Decision and the Charter(1984)

In 1984, the appelate division of the Supreme Court of Ontario conducted a meticulous examination of Section 23 of the Charter.(54) For the purpose of this study, comments will be restricted to the final outcome of its decisions. It is interesting to note that the Ontario Supreme Court's precedent setting interpretations were based on a thorough review of Canadian educational, legal and political history regarding minority language rights.

One of the fundamental questions addressed concerned the rules of interpretation. The Court maintained that the Charter "doit être interpreté de façon libérale car elle crée de nouveaux droits et effectivement, codifie les droits à l'instruction dans la langue de la minorité au pays."(55) The Court upheld the right to education in either French or English anywhere in Canada and maintained that "la qualité d'instruction dispensée à la minorité doit être de même qualité que celle dispensée à la majorité."(56)

One of the important Court decisions concerned the "sufficent numbers" question. It asserted that "Minority rights should not be left to the unfettered and undirected

discretion of local school boards no matter how competent and well-meaning they may be."(57) A study of the Ontario experience revealed a number of English school boards that had refused requests for a French school from francophone parents.(58) Therefore, the observation of the Court was that "Les membres anglophones des conseils scolaires ont beaucoup de difficulté à comprendre les besoins en matière d'enseignement ainsi que les aspirations des Franco-Ontariens et, par conséquent, à répondre à ces besoins et à ces aspirations de façon convenable."(59) In terms of actual numbers, the Court maintained that minimum or arbitrary figures could not be determined without justification.(60) Nor could a "numbers test" be applied across the province because "Ils peuvent varier selon les régions géographiques et selon la nature de l'enseignement qui est dispensé."(61) Yet, a perusal of the Ontario minimum numbers for French language justification indicated that they were amongst the highest in the country.(62)

The Court's interpretation with regard to the right to manage and control minority language facilities constitutes an unprecedented support for francophone minorities. The Court concluded that in reference to minority language facilities there was an inherent right for "an effective degree of management and control by the linguistic

minority."(63) The Court suggested that one possible way to satisfy the Canadian Charter requirement would be to place members of the linguistic minority on the local school boards. The Court wrote

> Those representatives should be given exclusive authority to make decisions pertaining to the provision of minority language instruction and facilities within their jurisdiction, including the expenditures of the funds provided for such instruction and facilities, and the appointment and direction of those responsible for the administration of such instruction and facilities.(64)

If the Supreme Court of Canada upholds these interpretations of the Charter, it will be the first time that the francophone minority will have the legal right to participate in the management and control of its educational destiny. A recent Alberta decision by Mr. Justice Purvis also argued that francophones "have the right to exercise a degree of exclusive control over French in minority education in Alberta."(65). Again, it is premature to assume that the Supreme Court will interpret this issue in a similar way.

The notion that francophones should receive their instruction in facilities in which the environment is French is an old issue. Yet, because of the legal ramifications of the eventual decision, the whole nature

and future direction of minority-language education hangs in the balance. For example, the provincial propensity for "mixed or bilingual" schools could be repudiated, because they cannot reflect the values and cultural heritage of the linguistic minority.(66) Furthermore, it could be argued that "minority language instruction might well mean all instruction in the language of the minority."(67) On the other hand, Pierre Foucher, a law professor and author of several constitutional studies, cautions that it may be premature to suppose that the Charter will be the linguistic panacea. Despite the Ontario decision, he warns that "le risque demeure d'une interprétation timide de certains tribunaux provinciaux et l'accumulation de précédents négatifs ..."(68) Furthermore, "Le parent, premier titulaire des droits constitutionels, hésite avant de poursuivre son gouvernement et son Conseil Scolaire ... Il préfère donc souvent se contenter de solutions mitoyennes."(69)

The R.C.B.B. and Nova Scotia

The book entitled Acadian Education in Nova Scotia: An Historical Survey to 1965 by George Rawlyk and Ruth Hafter, was the major reference for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The overall conclusion of

this analysis was the inexorable assimilation of Nova Scotian Acadians. Despite the fact that the proportion of the Acadian population increased from 11 percent in 1921 to approximately 15 percent in 1961, there was a net decrease in the total number of French-speaking persons.(70) Rawlyk and Hafter concluded that "in many respects the existing system is irrational unless one concedes that its major purpose is the gradual assimilation of the Acadian population."(71)

Rawlyk and Hafter attributed the assimilation process to three vital factors. First, there was a history of government indifference to recognize the educational or linguistic aspirations of the Acadians.(72) Acadian petitions, protests or appeals rarely warranted more than a cursory review by local or provincial governments. Moreover, provincial royal commissions on education in 1944 and 1954 respectively, failed to even mention Acadian education.(73) Likewise, between 1954 and 1964, the Nova Scotian Educational Office Gazette "covered almost every aspect of the educational system but there was no mention of Acadian schools."(74) In any case, Acadian requests for increased financial aid, school texts, school supplies, and equipment, were often denied or simply ignored. "Until 1930, no French books appeared on the recommended lists for

school libraries."(75) In addition, as late as 1960, the only French books prescribed for "bilingual schools" were a reader and a grammar.(76)

Second, the mandatory program of studies imposed an exacting pressure on francophone students and teachers. As previously noted, because the Acadian students were compelled to pass the same English exams as the English-speaking students,(77) any hope of maintaining a French school ambiance was unattainable. In effect, many Acadian teachers were obliged to provide French translations of their English textbooks in order to communicate with their unilingual French students.(78)

Third, Rawlyk and Hafter considered the apathy of the majority of the Acadians and the timidity of its leaders of even greater significance than the government indifference.(79) They argued that Acadians should have been more tenacious in presenting their legitimate grievances to government. One example is cited where important Acadian recommendations were summarily rejected by the provincial government. It was also asserted that "the Acadian leaders should have attempted to arouse public attention about the matter. Instead, they contented themselves with periodically reviewing the question and proposing it again to the Department of Education."(80)

Another cited example of alleged Acadian apathy was the abandonment of Collège Ste-Anne. The same authors maintained that "... the college and its alumni were unwilling or unable to persuade the Halifax officials to recognize Ste-Anne's as an authorized teacher training institute."(81)

The assessment of Acadian apathy and weak leadership appears overstated. In effect, the recommendation to "arouse public opinion" was devoid of significant meaning because of its failure to articulate any substantive alternative strategy. Deprived of government support or sympathy, the only pragmatic, albeit ineffectual means of protest, was the submission of petitions and peaceful lobbying of the government. Further, given their small numbers and great distances between the discrete communities, the Acadians lacked any political force or electoral strength.

Although the degree of criticism directed at the Acadian communities and their leaders seems severe, there was an unquestionable need for greater Acadian organization in order to secure a more productive relationship with the provincial government. Rawlyk posited that "the leaders must soon decide whether the tactics and policies that they had followed for so many years can actually succeed in

creating the atmosphere for a fruitful dialogue with the Department [of Education] and with the English-speaking majority it has often represented."(82)

As noted earlier, Rawlyk and Hafter's analysis of Nova Scotian Acadian education was the major research data upon which the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism based its observations and recommendations. Yet, the R.C.B.B. focussed its criticism on the provincial government inaction and neglect, rather than Acadian inability to win effective government support. The Royal Commission stated that "Bilingual schools exist in Nova Scotia, but they exist as isolated, neglected, and almost forgotten appendages of the province's English-language system."(83) Moreover, there was little evidence of "much planning or much attention given to the unique problems of bilingual schools."(84)

The R.C.B.B. reminded the Nova Scotia authorities that "the retention of the mother tongue in a minority situation requires special programs ... complete with textbooks and audio-visual aids and bilingual teachers to teach these programs in the classroom."(85) The Commission considered increased Acadian assimilation imminent without immediate changes to the school system. Furthermore, increased highway construction, expansion of English media, and the

development of tourism brought formerly isolated Acadian communities into daily contact with the English world and made them more vulnerable to assimilation.

In 1968, the premier of Nova Scotia declared that "French-speaking Canadians outside the province of Québec should have the same legal rights in education as the English-speaking Canadians in Québec."(86) Although there in no concrete evidence of a causal connection, there is a strong likelihood that three factors influenced this decision. First, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Bilculturalism had berated the Nova Scotia government for neglecting the unique educational problems of the Acadians. Second, with the publication of the findings of the R.C.B.B. English Canadians became aware of the growing separatist movement in Québec. The widespread publicity of this phenomenon and the spate of terrorist acts by the Front de Libération du Québec (more popularly known as the F.L.Q.), in the 1960s, heightened this awareness. Subsequently, the co-founding of the Parti Québécois by René Lévesque in 1968, illustrated that the notion of "Quebéc independence" was being politically pursued as an alternative to the Canadian federal system. Third, the Nova Scotian premier's acknowledgement of linguistic educational equality was stated at a Federal-Provincial conference in

1968, a popular forum for progressive pronouncements.

It could be argued that the Nova Scotian endorsement of educational equality was mere conciliatory rhetoric, for beyond public promises singularly little support was given to Acadian education. For example, a perusal of provincial education records between 1968 to 1981 reveals little evidence of long range planning for minority-language instruction or serious consideration of Acadian educational problems. Items which did warrant attention on a regular basis included the financial allocation to Acadian textbooks,(87) distribution of federally funded second language bursaries, the improvement of bilingual services,(88) enrolment figures for French programs, the costs and types of instructional materials, and the development of French courses and courses taught in French. Despite some curriculum planning germane to Acadian interests in the mid-1970s, there was no concern for the rate of assimilation that continued unabated.(89) It was clear that none of the R.C.B.B.'s major recommendations about Acadian education had any noticable impact on Nova Scotian educational policy. It wasn't until 1981, fifteen years after its initial report, that Acadian education received official provincial recognition and support.

Conclusion

In the last two decades, Canada has witnessed a positive attitudinal change, at least at the government levels, with regard to French and French instruction. There has been a proliferation of immersion programs, greater access to all French schools, a broadening of French programs, and one province has become officially bilingual.

The struggle for linguistic reform however, has been a slow, painful process. The up-hill battle against intransigent anglophone groups has been helped by the implementation and impact of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommendations, the indefatigable efforts of the Commissioners of Official Languages, the perseverance of francophone groups such as the F.F.H.Q. and its provincial counterparts, and the dedication of private individuals. Furthermore, the impact of the Canadian Charter, albeit presently before Canada's highest tribunal, could usher in a new era of minority language protection and the extension of linguistic rights.

On the other hand, the Nova Scotia Acadians have received few major benefits emanating from the aforementioned national reports, changes or reforms experienced in other parts of Canada. From the R.C.B.B.'s documented data on the alarming rate of their assimilation

in 1965, to the Commissioner's perennial advocacy of greater linguistic opportunities for Acadians, little concern was manifested by successive provincial governments. It appears however, that the culmulative effect of linguistic reform throughout Canada, in concert with francophone lobby activities, persuaded the government to act. In 1981, the Nova Scotia government introduced legislation to extend greater linguistic opportunities to Acadians.

Footnotes(Chapter III)

1) Howard and Tamara Palmer (eds.), A History of French-Speaking Albertans by Donald Smith. (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), p.103.

2) Ibid.

3) H.R.Innis, Bilingualism and Biculturalism: An Abridged Version of the Royal Commission Report. (Canada: Crown Copyrights, 1973), p.1. The word "race" is used in the older sense referring to a national group and carries no biological significance.

4) Ibid, p.2.

5) Ibid, p.3. These two terms have been often misunderstood. The policy of official bilingualism does not force anyone to speak French or English but is a guarantee of federal services in either language. Similarly, the term biculturalism refers to the two dominant cultures, but the federal government policy of multiculturalism is an acceptance of Canada's cultural diversity.

6) Ibid.

7) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book II (Ottawa: Crown Copyrights, 1970), p.1.

8) Ibid, p.7.

9) Ibid, Book II recommendations 420, 361, and 502.

10) Ibid, p.74. The term bilingual was abandoned by the R.C.B.B. because of its vagueness. Hence, any school in which languages are used might be called bilingual. The word minority was substituted.

11) Ibid, recommendation 614.

12) Ibid, p.22.

13) Ibid, p.21.

14) Ibid, p.20.

15) Ibid.

16) Ibid.

17) Commissioner of Official Languages Annual Report and Summary of the Report (Canada: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1976), p.9.

18) Ibid.

19) Ibid.

20) Ibid.

21) Ibid.

22) Ibid, 1977, p.9 (see Second Language Education Services).

23) Ibid.

24) Ibid, 1984, p.9.

25) Ibid, 1977, p.25.

26) Ibid, 1979, p.7.

27) Ibid, 1980, p.33.

28) Ibid.

29) Ibid, 1981, p.42. (A mixed or bilingual school is one where both English and French-speaking students attend; the amount of French taught varies with each situation.)

30) Ibid, 1982, p.33. (In 1982, a francophone group in New Brunswick requested a court injunction to stop French-speaking students from admission into immersion classes with anglophones.)

31) Ibid, 1981, p.33.

32) Ibid.

33) Ibid, 1982, p.30.

34) Ibid, 1981, p.38.

35) Ibid, 1977, p.28.

36) Ibid.

37) Ibid, 1971-77 reports reflect similar views.

38) Ibid, 1977, p.10.

39) Ibid.

40) Ibid, p.11.

41) Ibid, p.12.

42) Ibid, 1979, p.23.

43) Ibid, p.39.

44) Ibid, pp.30-32.

45) Ibid, p.32.

46) Ibid, 1978, p.36.

47) Ibid.

48) Ibid, 1977, p.28.

49) Ibid.

50) Ibid.

51) Ibid, 1978, p.18.

52) Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 23, subsections 1-3 (Minority Language Education Rights, Part I of the Constitutional Act, 1982).

53) For a detailed analysis consult Allan Boudreau's Minority Language Rights in Canada and Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1985.

54) Ibid, p.4.

55) Ibid, p.8.

56) Ibid.

57) Supreme Court of Ontario (Court of Appeal), (Toronto: Ontario, 1980), p.75.

58) Ibid, p.79.

59) Ibid, p.51.

60) Ibid.

61) Ibid.

62) Boudreau, op cit, p.13.

63) Ibid, p.14.

64) Ibid, p.15.

65) Ibid.

66) Ibid, p.10.

67) Ibid, p.12.

68) Pierre Foucher, Droits Scolaires des Francophones Hors Québec et l'Adhésion du Québec à la Loi Constitutionelle de 1982 (Ottawa: Canadian Law Information Council, 1985), p.2.

69) Ibid.

70) Rawlyk and Hafter, op cit, p.15.

71) Ibid, p.44.

72) Ibid.

73) Ibid, p.40.

74) Ibid.

75) Ibid, p.38.

76) Ibid, p.108.

77) Ibid, p.65.

78) Ibid (consult Chapter II of this study for further details).

79) Ibid, p.40.

80) Ibid.

81) Ibid.

82) Ibid, p.44.

83) R.C.B.B. (Book II), (Ottawa: Crown Copyrights, 1968), p.110.

84) Ibid.

85) Ibid.

86) Ibid, p.111.

87) Nova Scotia Department of Education Annual Reports, (Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, 1968-1984). In 1968, $4,700 (four thousand seven hundred dollars) was allocated for French textbooks. In that same year $11,915 (eleven thousand nine hundred fifteen dollars) was allocated for music books. In 1984, $18,000 (eighteen thousand dollars) was budgeted for French books, while $29,000 (twenty nine thousand dollars) was budgeted for music books. Despite the serious difficulty in attempting to compare these two items, it is clear that French textbooks did not warrant special treatment even after the passage of Bill 65.

88) Ibid. Bilingual services were offered in the regional libraries in Nova Scotia in 1975; translation services for loan materials at the Nova Scotia museum was introduced in 1981.

89) Ibid, 1976, p.12. In 1975, a tentative syllabus prepared for French grades was designed to offer a degree of continuity and uniformity in the field of language arts, grammar and literature in the four Acadian areas of the province. Futhermore, in 1976, guidelines for elementary social studies focussed on the linguistic, historical and cultural identity of the Nova Scotian Acadians.

Chapter IV

The Language of Instruction in Acadian Schools

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of contemporary Acadian communities, traces the development of La Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse and examines the provincial legislation that legalized French as a language of instruction in the Acadian schools of Nova Scotia.

Acadian Communities

A brief examination of the location, population and livlihoods of contemporary Acadian communities is essential to understanding their collective educational problems and institutions.

The combined Acadian population of approximately 36,000 people,(1) less than 5 percent of the provincial total, is located in the six major areas of Clare, Argyle, Chéticamp, Île Madame, Pomquet and the Halifax region.(2) Most of these areas are located along the coastline, contain no large or even medium-sized towns and constitute no more than 34 percent of the total population of the region.(3) There is no strong industrial base. The most important sources of employment are fishing, tourism,

forestry and agriculture respectively.(4) The average Acadian income is below the provincial and national averages and their percentage of unemployment is higher.(5)

Until recent times, the Acadian communities scattered throughout the province had little contact or coordinated activities on a provincial level.(6) Since 1977 Radio Canada has provided French radio and television service from its Maritime base in Moncton, New Brunswick. Although Nova Scotia does not have its own regional centre for French broadcasting, there is a daily time period allocated to local interests featuring correspondents in the major Acadian areas.(7)

Another communication linkage between Acadian centers is the only Acadian newspaper in Nova Scotia, Le Courrier which is published in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.(8) The stated goals of Le Courrier are:

1) devenir véritablement un journal provincial;

2) contribuer à l'unité des Acadiens;

3) animer la population Acadienne;

4) informer cette même population sur un variété de sujets qui concernent leur vie quotidienne et leur existence comme peuple. (9)

Despite the increased circulation over the past decade,(10) the financial viability of the paper is

threatened by the great distances between communities, the lack of population concentration in any given area and a general apathy towards its necessity.(11) The most serious problem is "Cette population est en grande partie assimilée ... et celle qui ne l'est pas est fortement anglicisée."(12) Le Courrier could never become a profitable enterprise unless there was "un vent de patriotisme accompagné d'une vague de sympathie des gouvernements, commerces et autres institutions..."(13) Despite the lack of government assistance two sources of financial support were secured. "Depuis 1972, le journal a toujours bénéficié d'une contribution financière de la Fédération Acadienne en échange de services, notamment la publicité."(14) Moreover, one of the ten full-time employees "est un coopérant français entièrement payé par le gouvernement de la France."(15)

There is an historical connection between the Acadian communities--they remain attached to their past, traditions, French language and Roman Catholicism.(16) This commitment is epitomized by the five historical societies which share the same goals: "étudier l'histoire et préserver les documents, les objets et toutes les traces de la culture acadienne."(17) In the Chéticamp area La Société Saint-Pierre, located in the Trois Pignon's building,

operates its office, a library, and archives of genealogy and a cultural centre for tourists and local residents.(18)

La Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse

The Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (the F.A.N.E.) was created in 1968.(19) This association was largely forged by a coterie of young university students who believed that there was a need to combat Anglo-assimilation.(20) The federal government provided both moral and financial support for their association and pledged future assistance in the form of annual grants.(21)

The principal aim of the F.A.N.E. was "développer une stratégie politique pour revendiquer nos besoins de combattre l'assimilation et assurer la survivance de notre culture.(22) The first executive council meeting in January, 1969 articulated four specific goals:

> 1) possibilité de sauver le fait français chez nous ou simplement le faire surgir à la surface, dans une optique pan-canadienne;
>
> 2) choisir une langue première parce qu'actuellement nous hésitons entre le français et l'anglais;
>
> 3) possibilité de changer le système scolaire favorisant plus la langue français et donc, nous mêmes;
>
> 4) d'insister sur l'adaptation dans le monde moderne industriel et changeant.(23)

The focus of the F.A.N.E. has always been on the

invaluable role of the educational system in the promotion of French language and Acadian culture.(24) By 1971 it officially stated that "L'éducation se situerait au premier rang des objectives [sic]"(25), and implemented a research program that acquired contributions from all participants in the educational process from the student to the school superintendent.(26) Thus, a concerted effort was exerted in order to: "Prendre l'opinion de tout le monde ...[and]... la participation et l'input des régions."(27)

The most critical school "malaise", identified in 1971, was the negative impact of the anglophone presence in the Acadian schools.(28) "Un nombre croissant d'Anglophones infiltrent les classes acadiennes, rendent la tâche de l'enseignement difficile ... certaines accomodations doivent être faites dans les classes, où il y a des anglophones."(29) The F.A.N.E. faced a dual problem of convincing the educational authorities and the Acadians themselves of the gradual assimilation resulting from increased anglophone school enrolments.(30) The Department of Education was not viewed however, as the crux of the problem; the major difficulty was to convince Acadians that their linguistic survival was threatened.(31) "...certains parents même acadiens refusent parfois l'instruction bilingue pour leurs enfants."(32) Moreover, it was

considered essential to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations before even approaching the provincial department of education. Thus, the education of Acadians became a priority. "L'animation devrait se faire en tout premier lieu, auprès des parents, et leur expliquer à fond les arguments en faveur d'une meilleure éducation acadienne."(33)

Although the F.A.N.E. attempted to stem the tide of anglicization, there was never consensual support for an all-French school. Rather, there was a consistent advocacy for bilingual education which was perceived as a means to achieve greater French fluency.(34)

On the pragmatic level, the F.A.N.E. lobbyied the Department of Education and government officials for increased funding, more teaching materials and a broadened French curriculum.(35) Moreover, a request was made for "la creation d'un comité et réprésentatif permanent, qui accompagnerait le service que le Ministre doit créer en faveur des écoles acadiennes."(36) In 1975, the Nova Scotia provincial government established the position of Assistant Director of Language Development and appointed J. Roland Aucoin, a native of Chéticamp.(37) This new position acknowledged the need "to provide new programs/courses and guidelines in French for subjects to be taught in the

French language in the Acadian schools..."(38) The F.A.N.E. equally expressed a concern about where and how the provincial government spent federal funds allocated for minority education.(39)

The 1976 annual conference of the F.A.N.E. drafted a number of proposals to deal with the perennial dilemma of increased anglophone enrolment. Classroom instruction was becoming more English as well as the school administrative language, and the French character of Acadian schools was being destroyed.(40) The following concerns/recommendations were endorsed:

1) there was a need for increased French instruction in Acadian schools;

2) the French character of the administration should be safeguarded;

3) school programs should promote the expansion of bilingualism;

4) the legal status of French instruction should be recognized.(41)

Subsequent F.A.N.E. conferences and meetings stressed the theme of "legal recognition" and the official designation of Acadian schools.(42) A host of allied educational reforms for Acadian areas was also advocated by the F.A.N.E. such as the creation of all-French school boards, making French a mandatory school subject, and the

implementation of a uniform French program(43)

By 1980, the political climate towards French education had improved. Premier John Buchanan declared that French education in the Acadian districts was considered a right and not simply a privilege. He said that "the question is not whether we protect that right but how best to do it..."(44) It appeared that the provincial government was ready to recognize "legal status" for French. Yet, Buchanan's promise was not new and had been reiterated on a number of public occasions by former provincial premiers.(45) Indeed, the crucial task was to translate political rhetoric into reality and to convince the Acadians themselves of the need for educational change.(46) In 1980, there were negotiations, meetings and discussions between the Department of Education officials and the F.A.N.E. in an effort to reach an accord about legal recognition of French.(47) The provincial network of francophone associations such as the francophone teachers, Acadian Students' Union and the Université Sainte-Anne supported the proposed educational changes. Endorsement also came from outside the francophone network, namely the President of King's College in Halifax, the Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union.(48)

At the federal level, the Commissioner of Official

Languages advocated increased educational services in French for the Acadians.(49) Federal assistance was also allocated for hiring extra French teachers, purchasing needed curriculum supplies, audio-visual equipment, special French projects and second language programs.(50) In 1979, funding was also given for the creation of an educational research center at the Université Sainte-Anne. (51) This "Centre provincial de ressources pédagogiques" (C.P.R.P.) complemented the two other research centers that were already there, namely "un centre d'études" and "un centre de recherche linguistiques".

A Conference of Francophones in 1980 added a new dimension to the "assimilation" debate, namely the phenomenon of exogamy or mixed marriages. "...la presence accrue d'anglophones dans nos écoles, à une génération nouvelle d'Acadiens assimilés issus de mariages mixtes et au contact plus grand de nos communautés avec la société anglophone néo-écossaise."(52) Because the present educational system was considered impotent to handle this problem "Qu'il soit résolu que l'on obtienne le droit à l'éducation française..."(53) The Conference reiterated the need to establish French as a legal language of instruction and requested "Le contrôle de nos structures d'éducation." (54) The F.A.N.E. argued that Acadians had a right "d'être

enseigné dans leur langue maternelle" (55) and that this right should be enshrined in provincial laws.(56) The need to be treated as a distinct community was stressed, and the following three recommendations were proposed to help achieve this end:

> 1) the need for additional funds to guarantee the present programs and to develop new programs and services;
>
> 2) the creation of a new administrative structure within the Department [of Education] to deal with the development of French education;
>
> 3) the creation of a special committee to promote and oversee the implementation of the legal status of French.(57)

By 1984 the following proposals, promoted in part by the F.A.N.E. since its inception, were implemented by the provincial government:

> 1) French was legalized as a language of classroom instruction and Acadian Status was recognized. The latter term refers to a school or part of a school that permitted French as a language of instruction, as well as a curriculum which offered more courses in French compared to other public schools;
>
> 2) an assistant director for the Department of Youth was appointed for the French section;
>
> 3) education counsellors were hired for four Acadian areas, working in conjunction with the local school boards, the Department of Education and the local teachers in order to help teachers in general, and to organize in-service training;
>
> 4) an advisory committee was established for Acadian schools;

5) the allocation of language bursaries for teachers and students to improve French proficiency was enacted;

6) a consultation committee, composed of superintendents, was set up to determine the educational needs of Acadian schools;

7) the introduction of studies in French in certain schools subject to local needs;

8) the publication of a list of available French textbooks. The books are to be assessed by four Acadian teachers from each region. In addition, the provincial textbook allowance for public schools was increased slightly;

9) the publication of guides or programs of study in French prepared by Acadian teachers;

10) a program of teacher training was established thanks to financial help from the Secretary of State's Office.(58)

A recurrent theme throughout the evolution of the F.A.N.E. was the need to convert the Acadian parents to its educational perspective. The legal recognition of French as a language of instruction was only deemed valuable "si les Acadiens de cette province en reconnaissent l'utilité."(59) Yet, the prospect of linguistic success was contingent on the invaluable support from all sectors of the Acadian communities. French education was considered a collective project "où parents et administrateurs scolaires, enseignants et étudiants, membres d'organismes communautaires doivent s'impliquer si l'on veut revitaliser le fait français en Nouvelle-Écosse."(60)

In 1984 a group of Acadian parents adopted a more direct role in the education of their children.

> "...une cinquantaine de parents venus de toute la province se réunissent en congrès et fondent la Fédération des Parents Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (F.P.A.N.E.) qui se regroupe les parents des élèves francophones dans le but de promouvoir l'éducation intégrale de la jeunesse francophone dans tous les milieux de la vie."(61)

The entry of the F.P.A.N.E. on the provincial scene added another political pressure group and gave moral support to Acadian education proponents. Their principal aims and goals were: "Promouvoir les valeurs éducatives, démocratiques, culturelles et religieuses des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse désirant le contrôle et le développement de l'éducation française de leurs enfants, par la formation d'un système d'écoles acadiennes..."(62) The F.P.A.N.E. developed a compilation of short and long term objectives, priorities, functions, responsibilities and strategies.(63) Given their common goals, a close cooperation was forged with the F.A.N.E., as well as with other Acadian groups such as the Acadian teachers and university professors.(64) In concert with the direct involvement in the myriad aspects of school life, was the emphasis on the parental role of education in the home. Furthermore, their demand for Acadian schools and

linguistic services had a more legal orientation for it was largely based on the Canadian Charter.(65)

In 1985, the F.A.N.E. and the F.P.A.N.E. signed a legal agreement to promote Acadian interests by coordinating their resources.(66) In essence, spheres of responsibilities were allocated. The F.A.N.E. became the official spokesperson for Nova Scotian Acadians at the provincial and national levels, exercising autonomy over post-secondary and technical education. By contrast, the F.P.A.N. E. assumed responsibility for public education (grades primary to 12), became the provincial coordinator for educational projects and the designated "pressure group" in government lobbying.(67) Both groups agreed to keep their respective seats on provincial committees, to establish a close cooperation on all education matters, to allow observers at each other's meetings and to submit any conflict or disagreement to binding arbritration.(68)

Since 1968 the F.A.N.E. has been directly involved in a host of Acadian athletic, economic, cultural, social and educational programs. The list includes the creation of "les Jeux de l'Acadie", the expansion of tourism in Acadian regions, the development of the Acadian womens' association, the organization of student leadership workshops and the consistent government lobbying to obtain

bilingual services.(69) In addition to the participation in these various activities, the F.A.N.E.'s principal goals remain:

> 1) to help Nova Scotian Acadians realize their interests; and
>
> 2) to protect and improve the language, culture, education and the social and economic life of all Acadians.(70)

Bill 65

In 1981, Terrance Donahoe, the education minister in John Buchanan's Conservative government, introduced an amendment to the Education Act designed to confer "legal status" on French as a language of instruction in Acadian schools.(71) Donahoe acknowledged that in the past, French "was tolerated rather than approved",(72) and that the time was overdue for its legal recognition. Moreover, he maintained that the Acadians were an important cultural component of the province but they "felt hampered in their effort to protect their heritage, develop their potential, and contribute to the growth of the province in all spheres."(73) There were additional factors that influenced Donahoe. He wrote

> During my frequent contacts with my colleagues from other provinces, and through my observations at several world conferences, I soon realized the importance of being able to communicate in a second or even in several languages. Indeed, I am

> convinced that the knowledge of both official languages is of great benefit. Furthermore, French is one of the two official languages of Canada and is the first language of 25% of the total Canadian population. The strong convictions I hold concerning the French fact in Canada, and more specifically in Nova Scotia, have led me to look more closely at our own efforts on two fronts:(1) The language of instruction in our Acadian schools and, (2) The teaching of French as a second language throughout the province.(74)

Following the introduction of Bill 65, a government Ministerial Committee was put in place to assist in the implementation of the legislation.(75) After a two year study, its recommendations, with some government modifications, were adopted as guidelines for Bill 65.(76)

The most significant features of Bill 65 are the following:

1) any district school board is empowered to request "Acadian Status" if there are a sufficient number of children whose first language learned and still understood is French, to warrant provision of public funds for instruction to be carried out in the French language;

2) legal power is delegated to the respective school boards to determine the ratio of instruction in French to English in Acadian schools, prescribe courses of study in French, and authorize French language textbooks and reading materials for use in Acadian schools;

3) the principal language of an Acadian school and communication of an Acadian school with the community it serves will be French;

4) any increase in French courses is allowed (after designation) provided such a decision is clearly acceptable to the community served by the Acadian school;

5) the implementation schedule is not to exceed five years without the expressed authorization of the Minister of Education;

6) the Minister may designate a school or part of it, to be Acadian after having received a school board request to this effect;

7) no school board is compelled to adopt the new policy.(77)

Bill 65 was heralded by the Government as a "linguistic watershed" for Acadians, and received unanimous support from the other provincial parties.(78) Yet, there are some fundamental flaws inherent in the legislation. First, the ostensible goal of increased French instruction is incumbent on the good will, understanding and sympathy of the respective school boards. Second, the discretionary power of the Minister to designate "Acadian Status" ultimately removes any legally entrenched minority-language rights. Third, the linguistic philosophy of the legislation is inconsistent with the documented research analysis endorsed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism an Biculturalism, Commissioners of Official Languages, francophone associations and other groups. In sum, there was an acknowledged uncertainty about how Acadians can best achieve bilingual fluency. Donahoe maintained that "to date, research has not established conclusively what the

ratio of French instruction to English instruction should be."(79) It appears that the research data cited earlier that equates mixed or bilingual schools with "assimilation factories" failed to convince the Nova Scotia authorities.(80) Fourth, Bill 65 did not seriously address the perennial complaint of Anglo-assimilation, as expressed in such phenomena as increased English enrolment and English usage in the Acadian schools. In effect, the Government suggested a physical separation of the anglophone and francophone students. The legislation stipulated that "part of a school" may be designated Acadian while the other part would be considered the English school.(81) The two schools would exist under the same roof and be required to have a bilingual administration. "...it is understood that while dealing with the Acadian school, the language will be French; while dealing with the English school, the language will be English."(82) Again, in such a situation, attempts to create an all-French ambiance would be extremely difficult, if not illusory. Fourth, no student is compelled to follow one "stream" or the other. Conceivably, an anglophone could follow the English stream throughout high school but take selected courses in the Acadian (French) stream, thus creating a "mixed class" which is anathema to the basic

philosophy of Acadian Status. Fifth, no special funding was legislated for potential structural changes in the school to enable separation of English and French streams, for additional staffing, teacher training for "immersion programs", textbooks, or a planned discussion with the affected communities prior to and during the transition period.(83) The Department declared however, that if there was a shortage of teachers sufficiently fluent in French it was "prepared to discuss ways and means to overcome the problem. Every effort should be made to assist teachers who are on school staff at present and who have interest in teaching in French to upgrade their qualifications in this area."(84) Despite this nebulous indication of some form of financial assistance, no guarantee was offered to the school boards as an incentive to implement "Acadian schools" in their respective jurisdictions.

The entrenchment of minority language rights in the Canadian Charter has also focussed attention on the serious limitations of Bill 65 vis-à-vis linguistic equality. Three of the major weaknesses concern the restriction on the beneficiaries, discretion conferred upon the authorities, and control and management areas.(85) A recapitulation of these areas of possible incompatibility with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms are:

1) the Charter requires that the parent qualifies for minority language rights and not the child because the child could have been the victim of assimilation. Conversely, with Bill 65 the qualification rests with the child's linguistic competence instead of the parents';

2) Section 23 of the Charter stipulates that the school boards should not have the unfettered discretion to determine if minority education should be dispensed with or not. Bill 65 confers this power on the school boards with the Minister of Education exercising the final decision;

3) as previously noted, the notion that a minority language group should exercise some degree of control over the management of their education has been supported by the Ontario Supreme Court decision. Bill 65 places this power exclusively in the hands of the respective school boards, subject to the legislative guidelines. This stipulation becomes problematic where French-speaking Acadians constitute the majority of the population but have little or no representation at the school board level. This is the present situation in Inverness County where one of the eight school board members is from Chéticamp, but he is opposed to expanding French curriculum in the local school.

Conclusion

It is important to note, that Rawlyk and Hafter's criticism of Acadian apathy at the leadership level has not been in evidence in recent times, for just the opposite is true. Since its creation in 1968, the F.A.N.E. has spearheaded a plethora of educational, cultural, economic and social reforms throughout the Acadian communities. In the education sphere, the F.A.N.E. is actively pursuing a dual policy of convincing the provincial government and Acadian parents of the imperative to stop assimilation that

threatened their linguistic and cultural existence. The culmination of its efforts, supported by allied francophone associations, other agencies and a sympathetic government, has been the historic legal recognition of French as a language of classroom instruction in Acadian schools and the establishment of Acadian Status embodied in Bill 65.

Bill 65 embraced the same general educational goals as other provincial public schools, but also endorsed the specific goals of bilingualism, and the acquisition of knowledge of Acadian identity in all its forms. Yet, despite the broadening of French rights, the problem of Anglo-assimilation was not adequately addressed. It appears that most Acadian schools are destined to become "mixed schools", with any physical separation of anglophone and francophone students left to the design and expense of the respective school boards.

In sum, the lack of additional government funding, the school boards' discretionary power over whether to request Acadian Status and the Minister of Education's veto power, place Acadian language rights at the mercy and whim of the governmental agencies.

In the final analysis, Bill 65 was a well-intentioned piece of legislation, but was predicated on the assumption that a slight increase in French content would offset the

accumulated impact of anglicization. Even if an increased French curriculum was the cure-all, there was no mandatory apparatus established to guarantee that schools boards would adopt these changes. Further, it is interesting to note that three of the four major Acadian areas have English dominated school boards. Lastly, Bill 65 failed to take into consideration the multiple causes of assimilation such as the role of English media, increased interaction with English-speaking people and the phenomenon of Acadian resistance to any language changes that might hurt their children's future employment possibilities.

Footnotes(Chapter IV)

1) La Vie Acadienne: Être Acadian Aujourd'hui, (Pointe-de-l'Église: Le Centre provincial des ressources pédagogiques, 1985), p.19. (Consult the map of Nova Scotia, found in Appendix A, for a better understanding of the location of the Acadian areas).

Counties	(absolute numbers)	Percentage (local population)
Halifax	7870	2.7
Digby(Clare)	7313	33.7
Yarmouth(Argyle)	7060	26.9
Richmond(Île Madame)	4110	33.5
Inverness(Chéticamp)	3630	16.3
Antigonish(Pomquet)	900	5.0
Cape Breton(Sydney)	1473	2.4
total	36030	4.2

2) Ibid, p.15. Approximately 10 percent of Halifax's population is of Acadian descent. There are also a number of Acadian enclaves on the outskirts of Halifax. Areas along the Eastern Shore such as Chezzetcook contain a large population of Acadian descendants but few of them under fifty years of age speak French.

3) Ibid, p.19.

4) There is a prosperous Clare-based Acadian fishing company (Comeau's Seafoods Limited) which has a network of provinicial, national and international markets. This company employs over two hundred and forty people, owns almost twenty boats, handles a variety of fish products and controls the various stages of production from the actual fishing to the marketing. Another successful Acadian controlled industry is "mink farming". Out of roughly one hundred mink farms in Nova Scotia, seventy-five are located in Digby County. It is estimated that between seven and eight million dollars is generated annually with most of it in this Acadian region. Despite the aforementioned financial success, the majority of Acadians live below the

national and provincial income averages. Ibid, pp.40-45.

5) Ibid, p.36.

6) Ibid, p.48 and p.82. The distance between the Acadians located in the Cape Breton counties of Inverness and Richmond and those of Clare and Argyle exceeds 700 kilometres. Even in Cape Breton, a mountain range separates Chéticamp from the other Acadian areas. It is interesting to note that in 1923 there were only nine kilometres of paved road and "que le 'Cabot Trail' ne devint une bonne route qu'en 1958..."

7) Ibid, p.72. The radio program À Marée Haute carries daily reports, interviews and information concerning the different Acadian regions. In 1984 the amount of radio coverage was increased from five hours to seven and one-half hours weekly. Despite the daily participation, the F.A.N.E. has lobbyied the federal government to set up a provincially based radio station to serve the exclusive interests of Nova Scotian Acadians. Because of budgetary restraints the Ministry of Communication has placed the project in abeyance.

8) Ibid, p.73. The original name of this weekly publication was Le Petit Courrier, founded in 1937 by Desire d'Eon. In 1977 the paper was purchased by L'Imprimerie Léscarbot Ltée and the name became Le Courrier.

9) Ibid. "Le tirage actuel en 1984 est 3,600 ou environ 15,000 lectures. Cela répresente une augmentation d'environ 500 % depuis 1972."

10) Ibid.

11) Ibid.

12) Ibid.

13) Ibid.

14) Ibid.

15) Ibid.

16) Ibid, p.66.

17) Ibid. The historical societies in Pomquet, Chéticamp, West Pubnico and Bay Saint Mary are members of a larger unit called the "Association des sociétés acadiennes de Nouvelle-Écosse (ASHANE)."

18) Ibid, p.28. La Société Saint-Pierre, founded in 1947, was dedicated towards the preservation of "l'héritage et de promouvoir le bien intellectuel, culturel, sociel et économique des Acadiens du Cap-Breton." Before the implementation of government sponsored student loans the "Société" performed that role "soit par des collectes dans les eglises soit par des collectes de porte en porte." In 1973, the federal agency "The Cape Breton Development Corporation"(DEVCO) provided funds for the construction of Les Trois Pignons in the village of Chéticamp.

19) The F.A.N.E.'s Papers/Minutes of Meetings for 1972, op cit (typewritten). In 1972, the F.F.N.E. changed its name to the F.A.N.E.

20) La Vie Acadienne, op cit, p.26. In 1967 four university students, Cyrille Le Blanc, Norbert Comeau, Yvon Deveau and Allain Deveau discussed the feasibility of a provinicial Acadian association with Father Léger Comeau. Consequently, the four students canvassed the Acadian areas in order to stimulate interest in a provincial conference. In 1968, 250 delegates, at the first Halifax conference, voted to form the F.F.N.E.

21) Ibid. Gérald Pelletier, Secretary of State in the Pierre Trudeau Liberal government, was the guest speaker in 1968 and presented the Acadians with a cheque for $10,000 on behalf of the federal government.

22) Le Courrier, op cit, 30 October, 1969, p.2.

23) The F.A.N.E.'s Papers/Minutes of Meetings of 1969, op cit, (typewritten).

24) Ibid, 1970. At the annual conference a committee was set up to study the legal status of French schools, French

istruction and the role and functions of the Acadian Schools Committee. The study included a meeting with the Director of Modern Languages at the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

25) Ibid, 1971.

26) Ibid.

27) Ibid.

28) Ibid. This situation surfaced at every annual meeting of the F.A.N.E. to the present day as one of the most destructive forces to the maintenance of a French ambiance in Acadian schools. It was agreed that "Pendant quelques annees la Federation devrait concentrer tous ses efforts sur ce problème majeur."

29) Ibid, 1972.

30) Ibid, 1972 and 1976. Formal requests were made to the Department to investigate the long range effects of increased enrolment. All Acadian communities were seen as potential victims; in 1976, Inverness County was considered to have this problem.

31) Ibid, 1973. The F.A.N.E. argued that "Le Ministre n'est pas toujours à blâmer au sujet de l'éducation acadienne."

32) Ibid, 1972.

33) Ibid, 1973.

34) The term "bilingual education" is employed in the context of a system that promotes written and oral proficiency in English and French, and does not allow one language to be the exclusive language of classroom instruction for all levels of pre-university education.

35) Ibid, 1984. Before 1974 there wasn't even a school manual in French.

36) Ibid, 1975. It appears that the F.A.N.E. was strongly influenced by a federal report in 1975 that revealed that

"...la seule province qui jusqu'au présent n'a fait aucun progrès au sujet de l'éducation française est la Nouvelle-Ecosse."The report further stated that Ottawa was spending a great deal of money "mais il n'y a aucune demande, un climat d'inquietude règne présentement." Ibid.

37) Aucoin remained in this position from August, 1975 until his retirement in June, 1986. A list of his official responsibilities follows:

1) To keep abreast of latest research and thinking in area of responsibilities by reading current publications and by attending conferences so that programs developed are sound and relevant.

2) To provide new programs/courses and guidelines in French for subjects to be taught in the French language in the Acadian schools, and to provide new programs/courses when the need arises and to up-date those existing in English, in all other modern (French, Spanish, German, Gaelic) languages and classical languages by coordinating and directing the efforts of staff in an effective plan of action.

3) To ensure that the best teaching and learning materials supporting the aims and goals of the programs are recommended for inclusion on the official textbook list by causing to be evaluated materials which seem to meet these requirements.

4) To recommend, in cooperation with Teacher Education, that supervisors and teachers responsible for the implementation of new programs are adequately prepared by the planning and the carrying out of a solid in-service program.

5) To promote more effective teaching of the Minority Language either as the first or second language by awarding teachers' bursaries funded by the Secretary of State.

6) To promote interest in bilingual education by awarding bursaries to study French either for summer immersion programs or full time studies.

7) To promote the study of the second official (French) language either as the first (mother tongue) or as the second language by judicious recommendations.

38) Interview with Department of Education officials, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 31 January, 1986.
In 1986 there were some courses taught in French that did not have French textbooks or manuals. It was stated that there has always been, and still is, great difficulty in acquiring French textbooks. For example, repeated requests for an Acadian history book since 1975, became a reality in 1984.

39) The F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes, op cit, 1975 (see Reunion du Bureau de Direction). The conference decided "Faire une enquête serieuse au sujet de l'éducation acadienne. Il faudrait avoir la possibilité d'avoir un bilan indiquant où vont les argents distribués pour le programme minoritaire." Furthermore, it was indicated that "la Nouvelle-Écosse a regressé au point de vue d'éducation française.." and it was necessary "...s'informer auprès du fédéral sur les politiques à suivre pour connaître la situation actuelle à ce sujet."

40) Ibid, 1976.

41) Ibid.

42) Ibid, 1976-1980.

43) Ibid, 1976. For a detailed reading of the 28 recommendations consult the 1976 F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes re Education.

44) Ibid, 1980.

45) Ibid.

46) Ibid.

47) Ibid. Many of the prominent Acadian educators, civic officials and community leaders were consulted on the shape and form of the proposed legislation.

48) Ibid.

49) A detailed description is found in Chapter III of this paper.

50) Ibid, 1979. In this year the federal funds were made available to assist Acadians. It was felt that "Chacune des regions Acadiennes a pu profiter de:

a) Services supplementaires d'enseignants. Ces enseignants ont comme tâche d'entreprendre des programmes d'enrichissement du français et/ou de rattrapage.

b) Matériel didactique nouveau et equipment audio-visuel.

c) Projets speciaux de français.

d) Projets pilotes de moniteurs pour l'enseignement du français en milieu minoritaire.

51) Ibid. The C.P.R.P. was established to help francophone teachers, in conjunction with the two other centers and the Department of Education, to produce new and better French programs. It is interesting to note that the C.P.R.P. loans in excess of 35,000 documents annually.

52) Ibid, 1980. Detailed information of surveys and research is contained in a document entitled "Suivi du Colloque en Education" (January, 1980).
Furthermore, a later report from the Clare-Argyle area in 1982 described the local phenomenon of accelerated assimilation. According to the report

"...beaucoup de familles ont demenagé dans l'Ouest pour chercher l'emploi." In addition, many Acadians expressed surprise that "...onze francophones se sont inscrits cette année dans les écoles protestantes ... ce qui constitute un phenomène nouveau." (see F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes, "Clare-Argyle report", 1982, for further information.)

53) Ibid, p.1.

54) Ibid, p.2.

55) Ibid, p.3.

56) Ibid.

57) Ibid, pp. 3-5. The F.A.N.E. argued that financial assistance was imperative for the proposed expansion of French programs.

58) Ibid. For a detailed explanation of the educational proposals consult the F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes, 1984, "Objectifs déjà Realisés en Matière d'Éducation", pp.3-4, Annex V.

59) Ibid, p.3.

60) Ibid, 1984, p.2. The representatives from each of the four Acadian communities included two school administrators, three teachers, four parents, two students, two school trustees, two representatives from community organizations and seven resource persons--a total of eighty-nine persons.

61) La Vie Acadienne, op cit, p.67.

62) The F.A.N.E.'s Papers/Minutes, op cit, 1984. In their files are a series of documents of the F.P.A.N.E. which outline their aims, goals, concerns, and strategies.

63) Ibid. Following is an outlined timetable of action projected over a three year period:

1985-86 -solidification de l'organisme (services)
-sensibiliser les parents acadiens à leurs droits linguistiques (revendication)
-participation des parents dans le milieu scolaire (institutionalisation)
-orientation et formation des bénévoles

1986-87 -porte-parole officiel des parents acadiens en matière scolaire (revendication)
-groupe de pression re:droits scolaires (revendication)
-partiellement financée par le département d'Éducation tel que la Nova Scotia Home and School Association
-supporter et appuyer les parents dans leurs

projets (services)

1987-88 -support et appui aux parents (services)
-contrôle et gestion des écoles acadiennes par des Acadiens/Acadiennes
-la F.P.A.N.E. devient partie integrante de la structure
-plus gros financement de la part du département d'éducation

64) Ibid.

65) Ibid. Bill 65 was also cited as a legal basis for requesting Acadian schools. However, the Canadian Charter guaranteed greater control over the management and direction of the school administration and curriculum. (For further information consult Chapter III).

66) The F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes, op cit, 10 July, 1985.

67) Ibid.

68) Ibid. The F.P.A.N.E. also agreed to:

1) protect Acadian interests with regard to all aspects of provincial laws;

2) protect parents' and students' interests during educational changes;

3) sit on committees/commissions regarding educational advance;

4) assure parental presence for all political demands or claims.

The F.A.N.E. agreed to:

1) be responsible for organization of information dossiers;

2) supply expertise, financial assistance and technical resources to the F.P.A.N.E. where possible.

69) Information pamphlet "The Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia is you, me and us", Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, January, 1986.

70) Interview with Yvon Samson, president of the F.A.N.E., Halifax, Nova Scotia, January, 1986. In 1986 the membership province wide was around 900 with an additional thirty corporate members. Any francophone over the age of fourteen can become a member by paying five dollars. As previously noted, the corporate membership category has been eliminated. A subsequent membership drive has increased the total provincial numbers to around twelve hundred.

71) Acts of 1981, op cit, p.1.

72) Department of Education Press Release, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1983, p.3. The French language never enjoyed legal status either in the private or public institutions. Any recognition in the schools or the provincial legislature was an extended privilege or an act of courtesy.

73) Acts of 1981, op cit, p.1.

74) Ibid, p.2.

75) The sixteen member (all-Acadian) committee was headed by Dr. Julius Comeau and consisted of Acadian teachers, principals, superintendents, counsellors, a Department representative and the administrative director from the F.A.N.E.

76) As noted, the "minutes" were not made public but are available for perusal at the Department of Education office in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

77) For further details consult the Nova Scotia Department of Education Guidelines re Acadian Schools.

78) The Liberal and New Democratic provincial parties supported the Conservative government's introduction of Bill 65.

79) Department of Education Press Release, op cit, p.3.

80) Previously cited in Chapter III.

81) "Department of Education official to the writer", op cit, p.2. The term "partially" Acadian is interpreted as a school where the two streams or programs (English and Acadian) exist under the same roof and the administration responds to their needs in either English or French. This form of Acadian Status was adopted for the Notre Dame de l'Annonciation in Chéticamp in September, 1986.

Other local schools which have implemented Acadian Status or are scheduled to do so are the following:

1) the Petit de Grat School (September, 1986) and will function completely in French as of September, 1987;

2) the Île Madame High School (September, 1988).

82) Ibid. Section 5A of the Acadian Education Act stipulated that "the principal language of an Acadian school and communication of the Acadian School with the community it serves shall be French." However, a Department official wrote that "Provision was made from the first for the use of both languages in the administration" in reference to the N.D.A. School designation in Chéticamp.

83) Department of Education Press Release, op cit, p.6. A five percent increase in funding for Acadian schools was implemented in 1983 as a result of the Walker Commission on provincial education. Thus, the Department did not anticipate any substantial increase in expenses. Furthermore, the department officials said that

"In traditional Acadian areas, the great majority of teachers are bilingual and may find it relatively easy to shift the teaching of content subjects from one language to another." Ibid.

84) Ibid.

85) For further details consult Allan Boudreau's "Minority Language Education Rights in Canada and in Nova Scotia", op cit.

Chapter V

Chéticamp and the Acadian Status Conflict

The Village of Chéticamp

This chapter attempts to describe briefly the location, physical appearance and institutional life of Chéticamp, examine the implications of Bill 65 and Acadian Status for the village, and outline the major events and principals involved in the conflict.

As detailed earlier, Chéticamp was established by former Acadian exiles who returned to Nova Scotia after the Expulsion of 1755. The village extends for several kilometres along the Atlantic coastline of northwestern Cape Breton Island, bordered on the south and north by the Acadian villages of Grand Étang and Petit Étang respectively. Because of limited immigration and their anglophobia, most residents are distantly related.(1)

The present population of Chéticamp is around 3,500.(2) The majority of the people belong to the same socio-economic class and share similar interests, language, religion and way of life.(3) The heart of the village is Sainte-Pierre Church which is situated next to the Notre Dame de l'Annonciation School and the Sacré Coeur Hospital, and directly in front of the cenotaph facing the ocean. Adjacent to the ocean frontage is the Co-operative

fish plant, two restaurants, two supermarkets, a drug store, several motels, tourist boutiques, a host of small commercial outlets and a community hall. At the northern edge of the village is the Trois Pignons, a building that houses the regional branch of the F.A.N.E., the Société St.-Pierre and the Elizabeth Le Fort Museum. Behind the Trois Pignons is the community arena. There is no cinema or live theatre but most people have televisions, and recently a local cable station called CHET Television was established.

The main sources of employment are the fishing, forestry and tourist industries. Although fishing is the main industry, forestry is second in economic importance, producing more than any other Acadian area, and approximately 10 percent of the provincial total.(4) Tourism, as well, has become a strong growth industry and a vital component of the local economy.(5) In the Chéticamp region there are seven co-operative movements, "et si l'on compte les membres de chacun, on arrive à un total de 6,500 membres, pour une population de 4,000 personnes, ce qui veut dire que la majorité des gens sont membres de plus d'une cooperative."(6) The co-operative movement was considered more than a commercial enterprise for it was "un mode de vie, c'est tout un avenir."(7)

Bill 65 and Acadian Status

Chéticamp is one of six Acadian areas in Nova Scotia which has successfully resisted Anglo-assimilation(8) despite the mandatory use of English textbooks and curriculum, the official use of English as a classroom language of instruction and the institutional discrimination against francophone teachers.(9) The adoption of Bill 65 in 1981 established legal recognition of French instruction in Acadian schools, promoted the preservation of the French language and Acadian culture and legitimized a system that was already in place.(10)

The first school board to implement an Acadian Status school was in southwestern Nova Scotia in 1982.(11) Other Acadian areas petitioned their respective school boards for similar action. In late 1983 the Inverness Municipal School Board responded to Acadian requests by establishing a special committee (referred to as the Acadian Committee) to study the feasibility of an Acadian school at Chéticamp.(12) The committee members were selected from Chéticamp and the surrounding districts. They included parents, teachers, the School principal, a regional representative from the F.A.N.E. and a School Board appointee.(13) The Acadian Committee's mandate(14) included

an analysis of the Guidelines of Bill 65, a discussion of its local application with the residents affected, a collection the peoples' viewpoints and subsequent recommendations to the Board.(15) Consequently, the Acadian Committee held a total of fifteen public or private meetings with the concerned citizens, parents and special groups.(16) The most significant proposals were the following:

1) the Notre Dame de l'Annonciation School should be designated an Acadian school;

2) a total "French Immersion" program for anglophone students (primary to grade 3);

3) an optional French immersion program should be made available to anglophone students at the nearby English-speaking community of Pleasant Bay;

4) all elementary Acadian schools should make French the language of administration, communication and instruction (except when English is taught as a subject);

5) all teaching, administrative and janitorial staff at the Notre Dame School should be bilingual;

6) Acadian history should be offered at the Acadian schools;

7) the Inverness School Board should designate French as a compulsory subject for grades 10, 11 and 12;

8) all students who wish to follow their programs of instruction in English should be considered the English school within the N.D.A. School building;

9) all students following the English school program (as described above) should form a homogeneous group for each grade and receive their instruction in English for all courses (except the subject of French);

10) the study of French as a second language should be a compulsory subject for all high school students in the English school at N.D.A.;

11) Acadian schools should play an active role in the development of the French language and Acadian culture.(17)

The Inverness Municipal School Board designated the N.D.A. School as "par tially Acadian"(18) and provided for French and English to be the administrative languages in order to serve the communities of Chéticamp, St. Joseph du Moines and Pleasant Bay. However, most of the recommendations of the Acadian Committee were not adopted. Those that were implemented included an increase in the number of courses offered in French, a French Immersion program for anglophone students (primary to 3), and the creation of "English and French streams". In other words, at the post-elementary level a student was free to take all of his or her subjects in English, as in presently the case. This is referred to as the English stream. By contrast, students who decide to take a required number of courses in French qualify for the Acadian stream. Furthermore, students in the English stream are permitted to take courses in French if they wish. A brief summary of the specific changes follows under the appropriate sub-headings.

Elementary (Primary to 6)

At present, grades primary (kindergarten) through 6 are conducted entirely in French. In September 1986, the choice of French immersion was made available for grades primary to grade 3. Although this program is not mandatory it is seen as an opportunity to help beginning students who come from non-francophone environments. Additional help will be available from grades 4 to 6 for any "students not adapting...to all French instruction."(19) Nonetheless, the Board hopes that by grade 5 the immersion students will be absorbed into the Acadian stream.(20)

The implementation timetable, starting with primary in 1986, will be followed each year by the progressive grade levels. In other words, the grade 4 program is scheduled to start in 1989.

Junior High (Grades 7 to 9)

At present, all subjects are taught in English with the exception of the elective subject of French, and one social studies course taught in French at each grade level. In September 1986, Mathematics and Health were offered as optional courses taught in French, at the Grade 7 level. In 1987, the same two subjects will be offered at the Grade 8

level and in 1988 at the Grade 9 level. In total, two additional courses in three grades, will be introduced over a three year period.

Senior High (Grades 10-12)

At present, all subjects are taught in English with the exception of the elective subject of French and an elective history course at each grade level. Acadian Status will allow one more course taught in French at each grade level. The optional courses will be Mathematics or Geography (grade 10), Mathematics or Economics (grade 11) and Mathematics or Political Science (grade 12). While there will be a total of six additional (optional) courses offered over a three-year period, students will only be able to select three of them.

In essence, the Inverness Municipal School Board introduced a minimum Acadian program which attempted to cause little inconvenience or impact on the present school population of roughly 630 students from Primary to Grade 12.(21) This is demonstrated by the following stipulations:

1. students who were in Grades 7 to 12 (1985 to 1986) were not affected by the changes;

2. a six-year timetable was selected instead of the maximum five years recommended by the Minister of

Education;

3. it is still possible for students to pursue their post-elementary studies entirely in English;

4. the elementary French immersion program is not mandatory;

5. the School Board guarantees that any further increases in French courses will require "the consent of the majority of the people of the area."(22)

The official authorization of Acadian Status for Cheticamp (July, 1985) caused a storm of controversy. Within weeks the village was polarized into two official opposing camps. The group called the Parents for Bilingualism (hereafter referred to as the P.F.B.), was against the concept and advocated an educational status quo. The P.F.B. had been organized since early 1983, but had waged an unsuccessful campaign to convince the proponents of Acadian Status that it would be destructive for the community. Their opposition was predicated on five essential points:

1) the present school system was well-equipped to produce bilingual students;

2) the increase of French courses would weaken the English component of the curriculum and consequently handicap their children in a competitive English job market;

3) the placement of anglophone children in the immersion program would cause them unnecessary stress and discord in the community;

4) the "dual streams" would cause a doubling up of classes because of the lack of numbers and result in an inferior education for the anglophones;

5) the establishment of Acadian Status was the first step towards an all-French school.(23)

After the combined effort of meetings, briefs, petitions and letters failed to dissuade the Board to rescind Acadian Status, the P.F.B. focussed its attention on the community and the vehicle of public forums. In June 1985, Marie Hébert, a native of St. Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba was invited to Chéticamp to speak about the "destructive powers of the Francophone movement in general and the Manitoba experience in particular."(24) Hébert argued that the proposed "Acadian Status" was analogous to a program implemented in her home town. In fact, there were similar school board promises such as minor increases in courses taught in French, guarantees of teacher job security and the protection of the anglophone minority. Despite these promises, teachers lost their jobs, their school became exclusively French and anglophone students were bussed to all-English schools.(25) These statements were officially unchallenged because Board representatives were not invited.(26) Following the talk, the P.F.B. requested the audience to decide whether or not they wanted to have

Acadian Status in light of what took place in Manitoba, according to Hébert. In sum, a vote was taken by a show of hands on whether or not Acadian Status was necessary or desirable for Chéticamp. The results were 482 against and 67 in favour.(27) When the Board ignored these results, the P.F.B. and supporters withdrew their children from school the following September in protest. The four day boycott of classes was accompanied by placard carrying parents and their children in front of the School, as well as the regional office of the F.A.N.E.(28) In spite of demonstrations, involving as many as 100 school children at one point, the School Board refused to change its decision. Nonetheless, the Inverness Municipal Council, a separate entity from the Board, acquiesced to the P.F.B.'s demand for a plebiscite in order to determine the public's opinion towards Acadian Status. Whereas the Municipal Council consists of only elected members, the School Board consists of both elected officials and provincial appointed members.(29)

Plebiscite Campaign

The announcement of a county-wide plebiscite exacerbated the mounting tension in the village and affected all citizens regardless of age, gender or

occupation. The fact that the two neighbouring anglophone villages were also allowed to vote fuelled the debate. Most community members felt compelled to take a stand. In any case, many family members, neighbours and friends found themselves on opposite sides of the issue.

A group of residents, headed by Raymond Roach, established "Le Comité pour le Oui" which promoted the concept of Acadian Status.(30) The P.F.B., headed by Arnold Dithurbide, became known as the "Non" committee (the acronym P.F.B. will continue to be used however for the sake of clarity).(31) Both groups waged a war of propaganda in an attempt to win supporters. The P.F.B. stressed the scenario of an eventual all-French school. On the other hand, the "Oui" group equally rejected the concept of an all-French school but promoted the notion of an increased French curriculum and freedom of choice.(32)

The "Oui" committee was handicapped because of its short preparation time before the plebiscite.(33) Its first strategy meeting October 8 was highlighed by an impassioned address shared by two prominent community members. "Les Pères Anselme Chiasson et Charles Aucoin, ont parlé d'histoire et de fierté acadienne et de l'assimilation qui a fait disparaître plus de 13 sur 19 régions d'origine acadienne à travers la Nouvelle-Écosse."(34) Roach reminded

the audience that their aim was to give Acadians the freedom of choice and not to establish, as had been alleged by the P.F.B., an all-French school. Roach added that the Acadian people did not want an all-French school, but felt many were confused about the actual details of Acadian Status.(35) The meeting closed on a nationalistic note when the assemblage sang the "Hommage à Chéticamp", la chanson thème du 200 ième anniversaire."(36)

The dominant themes of the plebiscite campaign revolved around the all-French school, the credibility of the School Board, the machinations of the F.A.N.E. and the debate over whether there was already enough French instruction at the N.D.A. School. The strategy employed by the "Oui" group included door-to-door canvassing, a number of public meetings and the circulation of bilingual pamphlets delivered to each household. This pamphlet included the endorsements and photos of the Minister of Education, the New Democratic Provincial Party leader, the chairman of the Board, the president of the F.A.N.E., the leader of the "Oui" group and a prominent retired priest.(37)

The Board joined in the propaganda war by placing a number of detailed bilingual explanations of a "partially Acadian school" in Le Courrier, installed a toll free

hotline for further information and agreed to meet with concerned residents.(38) Furthermore, the Board stressed the voluntary nature of the program and promised that "... at no time would we permit a total French school in Chéticamp."(39)

A radio debate October 9 failed to clarify the school question. The three candidates vying for a school board seat stated their position in favour or against "le statut acadien" but neglected to explain their rationale. One of the candidates however, was Arnold Dithurbide whose public opposition to the idea was the main plank in his political platform.(40)

The pre-plebiscite period was filled with anxiety. There were public meetings, private strategy sessions, accusations, counter accusations, threats, media interviews, as well as incessant discussions between residents. The prevailing misconception that the plebiscite was legally binding intensified activities on both sides.(41) Inflamed frustrations contributed to a rash of minor criminal offences. "Une auto appartenant au Conseil scolaire d'Inverness et stationée à côté de la maison d'un enseignant en faveur de l'école acadienne a été brulée."(42) Three other minor offences were investigated by police, two of which were directed against the parish

priest. For example, "Le téléphone du comité du Oui a été coupé ... les grosses lumières exterieures à l'église ont été cassées et deux pneus de l'auto du curé ont été crevés."(43)

The plebiscite results did not resolve the conflict conclusively. The final vote was "1499 personnes ont voté contre l'école acadienne ... et 1010 personnes en faveur."(44) Le Courrier established the percentages at 59 percent against and 41 percent in favour. Both committees claimed victory. The P.F.B. argued that the clear majority was evidence that the community rejected Acadian Status. At the school board level, Dithurbide, who had campaigned almost exclusively against "Acadian Status" won a seat. Indeed, Dithurbide cited his personal election as proof that the electorate wanted him to convey its disapproval to the other Board members.(45) The voting results were Dithurbide 2,359, Poirier 1,719 and Comeau 1,112.(46) A more decisive victory was claimed for the Chéticamp election results. Dithurbide maintained that the victory margin of 1013 to 636 for Comeau was more representative of the school question because they both lived in Chéticamp, wheras Poirier lived in the neighbouring village.(47)

By contrast, Roach claimed victory for the "Oui" forces by employing a different criterion of assessment.

Roach argued that plurality of votes was not an unequivocal rejection of Acadian Status. This linkage was deemed simplistic because most of the electorate thought that they were voting for or against an all-French school. He further stated that in just a few weeks of campagning much of the misinformation was clarified. Roach pointed out that the francophone vote was much closer if the votes from the anglophone areas were disregarded.(48) In addition, the debate over the raw numbers and percentages was considered academic by Roach, because there was a legal right to an Acadian school based on the Canadian Charter.(49)

The plebiscite campaign left a legacy of broken friendships, family quarrels, a residue of bitterness and a mutual resolve to continue the struggle. Dithurbide declared that "Il luttera ... contre l'école acadienne la raison pour laquelle il fut élu."(50) On the other hand, the "Oui" group argued that if the Board or provincial government reversed its decision for whatever reason, it was prepared "à aller jusqu'en Cour suprême du Canada pour défendre notre école acadienne."(51)

The first meeting of the newly elected School Board marked Dithurbide's first of several unsuccessful attempts to have Acadian Status withdrawn.(52) The options open to the P.F.B. now were: threats of legal action, another

school boycott or refusal by English-speaking parents to enrol their children in the elementary French immersion program.(53) Instead, the P.F.B. focussed their attention of the role of the F.A.N.E. and its local supporters. Accordingly, the F.A.N.E. was labelled the prime agitator behind the school question and an outsider. The local Co-op's executive was deemed a staunch supporter of the F.A.N.E. and was threatened with an economic boycott if its membership was not withdrawn from the F.A.N.E.(54) Consequently, the threat of a client boycott compelled the Co-op store to withdraw its corporate membership. Indeed, this local incident prompted the F.A.N.E. at the provincial level to eliminate its corporate membership category in favour of individual recruitment.(55)

Different Perspectives

The polarization of Chéticamp citizenry was a manifestation of two diametrically opposed perceptions of community. The school question merely crystalized the radical changes that had transpired since the 1960s. The once homogeneously French Acadian Catholic village now has a sizable anglophone, and to a lesser extent, Protestant population.(56) The fact that "près de 30 pour cent des étudiants de l'école N.D.A. de Chéticamp sont incapables de

suivre le programme régulier français"(57) reflected the anglophone presence. In any case, language friction surfaced first in the field of education due to daily communication problems and the teacher awareness of a decline of French usage. Especially the more senior staff, such as the School's principal, witnessed a deterioration in the quality and frequency of French use over the years. Nonetheless, language cleavages were also evident in religious services, sporting events and in the economic domain. According to one of the major conflict parties, the school controversy was "le terrain de bataille pour gagner la communauté."(58)

An examination of the two leadership groups reveals striking differences on fundamental issues such as group membership, Anglo-assimilation, bilingual education, French usage in community life and the value of Acadian history and culture.

Most of the P.F.B.'s executive consisted of members who were either anglophone, were married to an anglophone or had at least one parent who was an anglophone.(59) Although the P.F.B.'s opposition to Acadian Status was well documented earlier, the motivations of their supporters were unclear. In addition, the views of most residents regarding the school issue were also difficult to

determine. A questionnaire consequently, was circulated in the community in the hope that a better understanding of the controversy might be ascertained. Use of the questionnaire has provided some useful, albeit impressionistic data regarding the motivations of certain identifiable groups. It should be noted however, that the questionnaire was administered while the "school question" was still an emotional issue. Second, as previously mentioned, the P.F.B. refused to sanction or circulate the questionnaire because of personal questions concerning linguistic competency and French usage at home and in the work place.(60) Despite these limitations, the results furnish some useful insights into how some of the citizens and groups perceived the controversy.

Three categories were targeted for the survey, namely the teaching staff at the Notre Dame School, its students and the community at large. The results are based on an assessment of the most pertinent questions in concert with a compilation of opinions derived from an open ended question regarding their perceptions of the school controversy. One comment that recurred throughout the survey was the belief that "Acadian Status" was misunderstood by many community members. First, most of the teachers who answered the questionnaire (roughly 60

percent) were in favour of Acadian Status, maintained a need for increased French programs, felt that the Canadian Charter guaranteed a choice of public education in French or English but supported the need to produce bilingual students. Further, only one respondent was not a member of the F.A.N.E. Second, few of the students responded (roughly 20 percent) and the only common characteristic was the marked propensity to watch/listen to English programs. It is interesting to note that this phenomenon was shared by all three groups surveyed including the local F.A.N.E. membership. Third, almost one-half of the community respondents supported Acadian Status, were members or supporters of the F.A.N.E. (roughly 58 percent) and the overall role of their school system was seen as a vehicle to produce bilingual students.(61) In sum, there appeared to be a general consensus that Acadian Status was poorly understood, bilingualism was a community goal (subject to varying definitions) and the English media in print and electronic form played a daily role in information and entertainment. Correspondence with many of the P.F.B.'s supporters, along with taped interviews, reinforced these findings.(62)

The "Oui" group marshalled a strong endorsement from all the major francophone organizations in the Chéticamp

region. The list included the regional branch of the F.A.N.E., La Société Sainte-Pierre, Le Foyer-Ecole (St. Joseph du Moines), Les Commissaires de l'École N.D.A. and the Acadian Co-Op Council.(63) This latter support was particularly significant because it represented all seven co-op movements of the area. The Co-Op Council wrote that they "believe in preserving our culture and heritage. The family and the community have great responsibilities in this matter but the school has been and always will be the key instrument."(64) The Council also maintained that they wanted a bilingual school system where Acadians had "the right to an education in their own language and to accomodate the English children in a way that they would also be bilingual."(65) Each of these organizations supported Acadian Status actively in the village and submitted letters requesting this program to the School Board, the municipal and provincial governments.(66) Private individuals who played active roles in the school conflict included most of the staff and administrative personnel at the School, as well as a few prominent citizens such as Fathers Charles Aucoin and Anselme Chiasson.(67)

Anglo-Assimilation

The P.F.B. agreed that assimilation was occurring at a rapid rate in the Acadian areas of Nova Scotia but denied that this phenomenon was a local problem. Dithurbide declared that there was a confusion over national and provincial figures. "The provincial average may be 17 percent or whatever, but here in Cheticamp assimilation has been stabilized ... no one has lost their (sic) French ... if anything, they are learning more French."(68) The fact that French was spoken in most commercial outlets and private homes of the village was considered empirical evidence that the French language and culture were not in danger of disappearing.(69) Dithurbide further stated that "people could not lose their mother tongue unless they wanted to."(70)

The "Oui" supporters were equally convinced that the forces of assimilation had been chipping away at their French language since the 1960s. This was evidenced by the increased use of English in the village and the steady decline in the quality of spoken French. The "Oui" group also based their argument on the Secretary of State's annual reports, sundry research studies and the Statistics Canada figures of 1981, which placed the rate of assimilation for Inverness County at 16 percent.(71)

Bilingual Education

The P.F.B. argued that the N.D.A. School was adequately equipped to produce bilingual students, as expressed by the number of graduates pursuing university studies in either language.(72) This conviction was reinforced by the observation that some of their own children could speak both languages fluently and experienced little difficulty in switching from one language to the other.(73) Moreover, the P.F.B. maintained support for an all-French elementary program and argued that by the beginning of grade seven no more than one or two courses should be needed to sustain the knowledge of French.(74) This belief was based on the notion that the cumulative linguistic knowledge of seven years of elementary French would render a person irreversibly fluent.(75) Indeed, it was asserted that the post-elementary schooling should focus on the development of English written and verbal skills in order to equip students effectively for the English work world.(76) The only complaints about the present school program concerned the quality of English spoken by teachers and students, and the "pro-French teachers" who advocated exclusively francophone activities such as watching French television

programs and reading French books and newspapers.(77)

The "Oui" committee viewed a bilingual education differently. Despite its official agreement that the elementary schooling should be entirely in French, it was argued that this program only existed in theory. A true French ambiance could not exist because the anglophone students could not communicate in French. Students were allowed to ask questions and receive answers in English, English usage was officially discouraged but tolerated during non-class time, and teachers were incapable of dealing with the inherent problems of two linguistic groups in one classroom.(78) The "Oui" president posited that the only viable solution was a French immersion program which could address these particular needs. In effect, a "French immersion" program was considered the best way to help anglophone students learn French. Nonetheless, an attempt to implement an immersion program several years previously had met with strong opposition from the P.F.B. group.(79)

The influx of additional anglophones at the junior high level from the English areas of Pleasant Bay and Meat Cove aggravated the inability to create a French environment. More students spoke only English, few courses were taught in French and there were incidents in which the use of French was criticized. For example, a Pleasant Bay

group registered an official complaint with the School Board over the use of French during non-French periods. "During the instructional period of any English course, is it permissible, under the Provincial School System to have questions asked and answers given in the French language with English students present?"(80) This question also appeared in a Cape Breton newspaper along with the criticism that the Notre Dame School's graduation exercises were conducted totally in French.(81)

The increased anglophone enrolment was inextricably linked to the assimilation process according to the "Oui" committee. In 1982, Wilfred Boudreau, the principal of the N.D.A School stated that "28.6 pour cent des étudiants de la septième à la douzième année ... sont incapables de suivre le programme régulier en français offert à l'école ... [and] ...ces étudiants sont tous des anglophones."(82) Boudreau further asserted that "Il y a beaucoup de ces enfants qui proviennent de familles acadiennes qui ont vecu ailleurs et qui sont maintenant déménagées a Chéticamp."(83) The immediate problem was dealt with by hiring two additional teachers but no long term strategy was contemplated. Boudreau wrote: "... je suis convaincu que le plus d'étudiants anglophones on a, le plus facile et le plus vite l'anglicisation des étudiants acadiens se

fera. A moins que l'on ait un programme pour contre balancer cela."(84) Wilfred Boudreau's analysis was supported by the guidance counsellor for the four Acadian schools of Inverness County. Lionel Deveau argued that "pour éviter l'assimilation ... il est nécessaire de continuer les classes d'immersion dans les écoles élémentaires."(85) As noted, the P.F.B. have resisted any attempt to introduce French immersion programs at the Notre Dame School in Chéticamp.

Need for a Bilingual Community

The P.F.B. expressed the view that English residents should not be forced to speak in French and that both languages should be respected equally.(87) Their unsuccessful attempts to have the home and school meetings conducted in both languages attests to the group's dissatisfaction with a unilingual French community.(88) As previously stated, it was considered polite for a bilingual person to speak to a unilingual anglophone in English.(89) This attitude applied to formal as well as informal gatherings regardless of the size of the audience.(90) Indeed, according to the P.F.B., it was polite and practical for the local chamber of commerce to conduct its meetings in English because one of its members could only

speak English.(91) In addition, the P.F.B. requests for the occasional Catholic Mass in English and the publication of a bilingual parish bulletin, further illustrates their dissatisfaction with French only services. Ironically, the P.F.B. appeared to subscribe to a unilateral definition of bilingualism for English sponsored functions operated only in English. For example, a minor hockey banquet held in 1985 which involved a large contingent of francophone players and personnel from Chéticamp, was conducted exclusively in English. The P.F.B. defended this action on the premise that all the Acadians could understand English and a bilingual program would be too time consuming.(92) Even salutations in French were not considered necessary or appropriate by the majority of their executive.(93) On the other hand, the P.F.B. suggested that school graduation ceremonies should be in both languages because of politeness and the need to understand the ceremonies. Another contentious issue was the returning Acadians whose children could not speak French. Dithurbide pointed out that those Acadians "had not lost their French and their children were busy learning it ...[and]... it was an enrichment to the school and the community."(94)

The "Oui" group professed its willingness to live together with the anglophones with a minimum of friction

and a maximum of tolerance and understanding. Nonetheless, they were opposed to the increased use of English in all facets of the village life.(95) It portrayed the P.F.B as a group of disgruntled malcontents who refused to recognize the legitimacy of the French language and Acadian culture.(96) The previously mentioned "hockey banquet" was cited as an example of the P.F.B.'s entrenched attitude against French usage.(97) The fact that many anglophones had lived in Chéticamp for many years without learning or attempting to speak French, was also considered an insult to the Acadian culture, according to the president of the "Oui" committee. For this reason alone, anglophones were considered unable to understand or appreciate the erosion of French language and culture.(98)

Bill 65 and Clare-Argyle

A study of the Chéticamp school conflict cannot be made without reference to the first Acadian community that implemented Acadian Status. The amalgamation of the Clare and Argyle areas in 1982 was followed by the introduction of an Acadian Status school.(99) This action precipitated a bitter struggle similar to the Chéticamp controversy, which resulted in a series of protests, public confrontations and opposing groups.(100) This situation played a vital role in

inflaming the fears and shaping the strategy of the P.F.B. For example, the executive of the movement to stop Acadian Status in Clare-Argyle warned the P.F.B. of the nefarious consequences of this legislation. Following are some of the most important "verbatim" comments contained in correspondence sent to the P.F.B.:

> 1) the Clare-Argyle School Board is being controlled by the same people who are promoting the "Yes" vote [the F.A.N.E.]; Not a single issue from anyone but the Pro-French lobby has been addressed since the implementation of Acadian schools;
>
> 2) students following the English program are unable to get adequate French courses;
>
> 3) there are unilingual French report cards, and all school positions must be filled by bilingual staff from teachers to janitors;
>
> 4) La F.A.N.E. has more control over the school programming and operation;
>
> 5) parents are invited to school functions on one condition--"you're welcome if you understand French";
>
> 6) over 86% of the Acadians did not want a change but Donahoe "chose to honour the wishes of La F.A.N.E.";
>
> 7) there was a successful program before the changes.(101)

It is interesting to note that much of the rhetoric used in the Clare-Argyle struggle surfaced in the Chéticamp conflict. The notion of conspiracy was blatant. "Those promoting the Yes vote are paid political agitators, most

of whom are known to us and have been involved with the issue here. Their interests are those of promoting a linguistic and cultural apartheid whose evil effects could last for generations."(102) Although it is unclear to what extent the Clare-Argyle leadership played in the Chéticamp dispute, it is clear that they gave moral support and advice to the P.F.B.(103)

Support for Acadian Status

Outside of the Chéticamp area there were many francophone organizations across the Maritimes and Canada that registered their moral support for Acadian Status.(104) Within Nova Scotia, the F.A.N.E., the F.P.A.N.E., the Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse and other francophone associations gave their encouragement and support.(105)

Outside the francophpone organizational network there were other groups and individuals who played an active role. The Inverness Municipal School Board, albeit late in the conflict, waged an information blitz in order to allay the fears of an all-French school. The Minister of Education, responsible for Bill 65, promoted its merits, met with opposing groups and rejected the legal right of the Municipal Council to sanction the plebiscite. The local

Conservative member of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, Dr. Jim MacLean, echoed the views of Donahoe. The official opposition Liberal Party vacillated on the issue. The Liberals voted for Bill 65, but supported the legitimacy of the "plebiscite", and later reversed their position again by accepting Acadian Status.(106)

The most significant contribution made by a politican, after the passage of Bill 65, was that of Alexa McDonough, leader of the provincial New Democratic Party. McDonough's support for Acadian Status was based on philosophical principles. She articulated that Acadians had an historical and legal right to an education in their own language.(107) Her conviction was based both on Bill 65 and the Canadian Charter. Further, the plebiscite was depicted as legally pointless because "the numerical majority could not decide the legal rights of the minority."(108) McDonough met with the conflict parties on several occasions in an attempt to help resolve the dispute. McDonough nonetheless, praised the provincial government's landmark decision for its support of Acadian Status for Chéticamp. "Toutefois, dans ce cas-ci, je félicite le ministre de l'éducation et le Conseil scolaire du Comté d'Inverness d'avoir respecté l'idée et l'intention de la loi 65 à travers cette très difficile controverse."(109) Yet, McDonough criticized the

Government and the School Board for not involving the community early enough in the process in order to obviate any hysterical or exaggerated speculations associated with a "partially Acadian" school.(110)

The Notion of Conspiracy

The P.F.B.'s conviction that Acadian Status was a disguised "all-French" school was not rooted in the legislation which clearly guaranteed an all-English education, but rather in the belief that there was a francophone covenant to gain control of the school system.(111) The P.F.B.'s written brief stated that

> The Francophone organization in Canada takes its orders from Quebec separatists. They thrive on destruction. They are the people who have ripped the Canadian flag down from the Quebec legislative assembly. They used the Canadian flag for a mat at their assemblies. They will surely be successful in making Cheticamp into another French ghetto because those who have the power to stop them have turned their backs on the people of Cheticamp just as they ~~also~~ have done in Newcastle, New Brunswick, St.-Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba and Clare-Argyle.(112)

In sum, the P.F.B. alleged that there was a global policy of community control via the school system; it was directed by the Federation des Francophones Hors Quebec at the national level and channeled through a network of provincial associations. The P.F.B. further argued that the

F.F.H.Q. and its provincial counterparts received financial assistance through the Secretary of States's office, the Québec government and the government of France.(113) In addition, according to the P.F.B., the F.A.N.E. was dipicted as a well-organized, well-financed pressure group supported by the provincial Conservative government, the Inverness Municipal School Board and the New Democratic Party.(114) Their collective support for Acadian Status was viewed in this conspiratorial vein.

The P.F.B described themselves as a small community-based group fighting against overwhelming odds to preserve their constitutional rights to a language of their choice.(115) Despite the fact that they "had fought an election campaign and won ... the government refused to recognize the democratic rights of the majority."(116) The conviction that a francophone conspiracy existed contributed to a narrow interpretation of anything affecting Chéticamp. For example, the P.F.B. interpreted the following discrete events as integral elements of a conspiratorial puzzle:

1) the Ministerial Advisory Committee, responsible for Bill 65 recommendations consisted almost entirely of F.A.N.E. members;

2) the communities per se were never directly consulted by this Committee;

3) the Government supported the F.A.N.E. in the Clare-Argyle dispute, despite the overwhelming opposition by the local residents;

4) the Acadian Committee, dominated by members of the F.A.N.E., refused to meet with all affected groups or concerned citizens;

5) the Acadian Committee was in direct violation of its mandate by not reflecting the views of the Cheticamp residents;

6) the Board sanctioned Acadian Status because of the provincial government's threat to withdraw the 5 percent additional funding allocated for Acadian schools;

7) the Board spent $4,000.00 during the plebiscite campaign in an attempt to sway parents into voting for Acadian Status.(117)

The Roots of Conflict

The principal focus of this chapter has been the fundamental disagreement between two groups and their respective perceptions of community and their rights. Both groups attempted to convince the electorate that their vision was the correct one. What appeared to be a slight broadening of French curriculum to one group became the first step towards an all-French school for another group. The atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust that surrounded the Acadian Status issue had its roots in the changing perceptions of community. This was compounded by the inaction, poor planning and insensitivity of certain governmental bodies. For example, the provincial

government's Ministerial Committee responsible for the study of Acadian schooling in 1981 did not communicate directly with members of the Acadian communities. Because this Committee consisted of Acadian leaders from a variety of professions and groups from across the province, their mandate was restricted to consultation at the school board level. Furthermore, its "minutes" were never made public, nor was the complete list of recommendations divulged. This was done because "many of the points of decisions are sensitive and may create misunderstanding if they were quoted out of context."(118) It should be noted that these "minutes" are available upon request which suggests that there is nothing sinister or untoward about its contents.(119) Nonetheless, given the antecedent language problems experienced during the Clare-Argyle conflict, as noted, a provincial government information program concerning Bill 65 and Acadian Status would have been invaluable. Again, the provincial department of education did not anticipate any major problems in Chéticamp because, unlike Clare-Argyle, the community was largely French Acadian and the changes were minor in scope.(120) In retrospect however, it appeared to certain groups that the perceived secrecy was more the result of surreptious design than the lack of foresight.

The Inverness Municipal School Board as well, could have forestalled many of the misunderstandings regarding Acadian Status. The Acadian Committee, appointed by the School Board, had the mandate to study the feasibility of such a program but the Board itself never informed the public clearly or directly of its intentions. The Board's lack of direct contact with the citizens and failure to provide the Acadian Committee with details of its intentions, caused confusion and generated speculation. For example, when the Acadian Committee was unable to answer basic germane questions, the "Parents For Bilingualism" filled this vacuum with their own conspiratorial explanations. Further, because much of the information supplied by the P.F.B. was accurate, albeit sometimes out of context, their credibility in the eyes of the community increased.(121) By contrast, the Acadian Committee appeared to be poorly informed and consequently lost some credibility. Unfortunately, the Board did not draw upon the Clare-Argyle experience. In this case the local school board set up a private six-month study and subsequently hired the author of the research to coordinate the implementation of an Acadian Status school.(122) In the final analysis, the Inverness School Board's eleventh hour attempt to furnish Chéticamp residents with clear detailed

information was met by a wall of cynicism and suspicion.(123) Perhaps the Board's most damaging action was its refusal to give an unequivocal assurance that anglophone students would never be bussed to an English school outside the village.(124) The rumoured future regional high school for Chéticamp anglophones gained great currency in Chéticamp as a plausible scenario.(125)

The P.F.B. argued that much of the secrecy and surreptious dealings were engineered by the F.A.N.E., which was the catalytic agent behind Bill 65.(126) This conviction was reinforced by the revelation of a financial linkage between Le Courrier and the F.A.N.E. Despite the fact that the F.A.N.E.'s persistent lobbying for Bill 65 and their financial support of the newspaper were well-documented in the school's Acadian history text,(127) this belated discovery by the P.F.B. was more evidence of conspiracy. The financial connection between the the F.A.N.E. and Le Courrier was also an explanation why the newspaper reporting always favoured the F.A.N.E. It should be reiterated that the newspaper shared identical linguistic and cultural goals with the F.A.N.E., so the revelation of an intimate parternership should not come as any surprise. However, research data suggests that the Le Courrier attempted to present a balanced coverage of the

dispute, but it was clear that given its obvious bias, the paper favoured an extension of language rights.

In part, the F.A.N.E. had inadvertently contributed to an air of mystery by not making its policies, aims and short and long term goals known to the community.(128) As mentioned, the F.A.N.E. was involved in a variety of social, economic, cultural and educational programs, but assumed that people were cognizant of these activities.(129) In any event, one positive aspect of the school crisis was the circulation of an information pamphlet which detailed the F.A.N.E.'s community involvement, as well as a financial statement of expenses and salaries.(130)

Conclusion

The implementation of Acadian Status in Chéticamp was the product of a local effort, vigourously endorsed by the regional branch of the F.A.N.E. This designation provoked a clash of opposing concepts of community values. In part, both groups viewed the N.D.A. School as a form of panacea to achieve their own ends. For one group it represented the bulwark against Anglo-assimilation, and for the other the vehicle for a quality English education that would allow their children to compete successfully in the work force.

Whereas both groups subscribed to the notion of a bilingual education, their definitions of the degree and intensity were radically different. The P.F.B. argued that an exclusively French elementary program, along with a few post-elementary courses in French could produce bilingual students. On the other hand, the "Oui" group maintained that the notion of a bilingual education could not be reduced to a mathematical equation of 50/50. Furthermore, its perception of the "so-called" French elementary program was illusory because of the widespread use of English. Its solution was the implementation of immersion instruction to assist the anglophones to become bilingual, and at the same time remove the pedagogical problems of two linguistic groups in the same classroom. In addition, there was an advocacy of increased French curriculum at the post-elementary levels.

The P.F.B. considered any tampering with the educational system unwarranted and politically inspired by outside forces such as the F.A.N.E. This latter conviction was influenced by perceived similar situations both in Nova Scotia and throughout Canada. Conversely, the Oui group argued that if the school system was not altered immediately, assimilation could not be avoided. Further, the Acadian Status offered an opportunity of increased

French but did not compel anyone to follow the program.

The net result was a collection of exacerbated feelings and blunt, heavy-sided arguments in collision. Chéticamp became the battleground with the majority of the people being torn between the two polarized positions.

Footnotes(Chapter V)

1) Most local Acadians can trace their ancestry to "Les 14 Vieux" who settled Chéticamp in 1785 as hired fishermen for Charles Robin. Names such as Aucoin, Chiasson, Cormier, Boudreau, Deveau, Le Blanc, Gaudet, Maillet and Poirier are commonplace today.

Bona Arsenault, History of the Acadians (Québec: Le Conseil de la Vie française en Amérique, 1966), p.227.

2) Although different sources place the figures as high as 4,000, Statistics Canada records a total of 3,595 persons who claim French as their mother tongue in Inverness County. The actual village of Chéticamp forms part of the overall county figures but it was estimated that the number was approximately 3,300.

Statistics Canada, 1981.

More recent figures reflect only slight changes:

Total Acadian population		Percentage
Nova Scotia	36,030	4.2
Inverness County	3,630	16.0 (N.S. Acadians)

La Vie Acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse: Être Acadien Aujourd'hui, (Pointe -de-l'Église: Le Centre provincial de ressources pédagogiques, 1985), p.19.

No accurate accounts exist but it is estimated by the F.A.N.E. that no more that 6 percent of Chéticamp residents speak only English. There is also a small congregation of members who belong to the United Church and Jehovah's Witnesses respectively.

Interview with Yvon Samson, president of the Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Halifax, Nova Scotia, January 27, 1985.

4) La Vie Acadienne, op cit, p.14.

5) Ibid, p.14, and p.48. Approximately 23 percent of the Nova Scotian tourist dollars are spent in Cape Breton and annually one-half million tourists pass through Chéticamp which is situated at the western opening of the Cabot

Trail. In essence, "Les Acadiens prennent jusqu'au présent une bien petite part du gateau: ils n'exploitent ... que 13 hôtels ou môtels dont 9 situés à Chéticamp."

6) Ibid, p.53. The co-operatives include the fishing and forestry industries, a credit union, supermarket, insurance company, and "rug hooking". There are a total of 250 full-time employees and a combined sales of over 10 million dollars by the shareholders.

7) Ibid. In 1983 there were 110 credit unions in Nova Scotia of which 19 were in Acadian areas and over one-half of the 36,030 Acadians (18,682) were registered members. It is interesting to note that Chéticamp and Île Madame (eastern Cape Breton) have a combined membership of 2,310).

8) "Section du Cap-Breton." Le Courrier, 16 October 1985, p.1.

9) Interview with Department of Education officials, Halifax, 1 February, 1986. Detailed information concerning school problems and discrimination against French as a language of instruction is found in Chapter III of this paper. However, in 1986 French texts were not available for all courses taught in Acadian schools.

10) Minister of Education to District Board Chairman, 10 December, 1982, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
The new legislation "gives legal status to the traditional practice which had existed of using the French language as a language of instruction in certain elementary and secondary schools of the province."

11) Requests and representations for Acadian Status were made to the Clare-Argyle School Board by the local residents and the regional branch of the F.A.N.E.
The F.A.N.E., (Chéticamp, N.S.), association records, 1983-84, (Typewritten).

12) The Acadian Committee (Chéticamp, Nova Scotia), Minutes of Meetings, 16 January, 1984, (typewritten). The School Board chose eight members who in turn selected five parents from a list of twelve names submitted by the Chéticamp and Margaree trustees. The composition of the committee was amended to include three bilingual parents, two from the Pleasant Bay area and one from the Chéticamp region.

13) Ibid.

14) Ibid. The actual details of the mandate follows:

a) to become familiar with and understand Bill 65 and the guidelines stated by the Minister of Education;

b) to assist central office staff and the Board in informing the public about Bill 65 and its accompanying guidelines;

c) to conduct public meetings throughout the Acadian region of the county in order to inform parents, students and ratepayers about Bill 65 and the guidelines for Acadian schools, and to share their views, wishes and concerns collective to the implementation of the Acadian school(s);

d) only if deemed necessary by the committee or the Board [School], to conduct a survey by means of a questionnaire;

e) taking into account the comments, views, requests expressed at the public meetings or otherwise, the committee will submit to the Board (a) recommendations as to what schools or parts of schools to be designated as Acadian schools; (b)proposal(s) to implement the guidelines of the Minister in the Acadian schools to be designates.

15) Ibid, 10 April, 1984. The Acadian Committee met with parents at the elementary and secondary school students on separate occasions, the P.F.B., the students, student council and the teaching staff of the N.D.A. School.

16) Ibid. Some of the recommendations dealt with increased funding, additional staffing, remedial programs, the teaching of religion, and health.

17) Ibid. For more detailed information consult the Inverness Municipal School Board's document entitled 42 Recommendations.

18) "Senior official of Department of Education to the writer", Halifax, Nova Scotia, 26 June, 1986. The guidelines issued by the Minister of Education made reference "...to have a school or part of a school designated Acadian. According to the Ministry of Education it was "assumed that the phrase used in the submission by the Inverness School Board

carried the same connotation."

19) "Board Press Release", Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, 1985, (n.d.), p.1.

20) Ibid.

21) Le Courrier, op cit, 16 October, 1985, p.1. A Board explanation of the proposed program was carried in the local English and French newspapers.

22) "Board Press Release", op cit, p.4. It should be noted that the word "majority" is the Board's interpretation of the guidelines for Bill 65. There is no implication that a plebiscite would be required to determine an increase in the number of subjects taught in French. The guidelines stipulate that courses in French may be increased if "such a decision is clearly acceptable to the community served by the Acadian school.

23) Interview with the "Parents for Bilingualism", Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4 February, 1986. The P.F.B. group was founded in December, 1983, with the aim of resisting Acadian Status for Chéticamp. These arguments were tape recorded during a meeting with Arnold Dithurbide, the president, along with three members of its "de facto" executive. Information garnered from the interview was cross-referenced with several published accounts and documentation given to this writer by the P.F.B.

24) Ibid.

25) Ibid.

26) Ibid. The meeting was open to the general public but no School Board representative was invited to debate the issue.

27) Ibid. A copy of the results was also included in the documentation package.

28) Ibid. An agreement was reached with the School Board not to penalize the students who lost school time because of the boycott as long as they returned to school the following day.

29) "Municipal Council Minutes", Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, 18 September, 1985, p.5. As noted, the Municipal Council is separate from the Board. September 18, 1985, the Council voted 10 to 1 to give the people of Chéticamp the right to hold a plebiscite on the issue of Acadian Status.

30) "Comité pour le Oui Minutes", Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 5, October 1985-February 10, 1986. The "Comité pour le Oui" was incorporated as a legal entity until February, 1986, with Raymond Roach as president and an executive of five directors. Presently, there is another organization called the "Association des Parents Acadiens" which is headed by Roach as president. This group was an outgrowth of the "Oui" committee and advocates essentially the same linguistic and educational goals. Nonetheless, for clarity, the term "Oui" committee will be used throughout the essay.

31) Throughout the plebiscite campaign there was a constant reference to the P.F.B. instead of the "No" comittee.

32) Interview with Raymond Roach, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4 February, 1986.

33) The date selected for the plebiscite coincided with the county civic and school board elections 19, October, 1985. The plebiscite question was simply added to the election ballot sheet. The bilingual question was: Are you in favour of Acadian Status as proposed by Bill 65 for the N.D.A. School ... Yes__ No___ .

34) Previously cited (see #8 footnote).

35) Le Courrier, op cit, 16, October, 1985, p.1.

36) Ibid, 23 October, p.2.

37) Interview with Raymond Roach, op cit, 6 February, 1986. The two page pamphlet and other campaign expenses were paid for through donations and local fund raising functions.

38) Le Courrier, op cit, 18 September, 1985.

39) Ibid, 2 October, 1985.

40) Ibid.

41) This observation was based on interviews with the principals

involved in the school controversy, as well as "Letters to the Editor" column of local newspapers such as Le Courrier and The Inverness Oran.

42) Le Courrier, op cit, 23 October, 1986, p.1.

43) Ibid, pp. 1-2.

44) Ibid, 30 October, 1986, p.1.

45) Ibid, p.2.

46) Ibid.

47) Ibid.

48) Ibid, 23 October, p.1. Roach estimated that if the English areas of Pleasant Bay and Meat Cove were disregarded the vote would have been "approximately 44% or 996 votes for the Oui." Further, it was claimed that many residents were converted to the Oui group at the last minute. This was demonstrated by the marked decrease in the P.F.B.'s alleged support. The P.F.B. "ont declaré à plusieurs reprises que 80-90 pour cent et même 95 pour cent de la population est contre l'école acadienne."

49) Ibid, p.1.

50) Ibid.

51) Ibid.

52) Ibid, 8 February, 1986. Dithurbide's motion to reverse the Acadian Status decision was defeated by a vote of 6-2. Dithurbide's immediate response was a temporary refusal to participate in other Board discussions.

53) The threat of another school boycott did not materialize. In fact, nine English-speaking parents enrolled their children in the French immersion program at the Primary level in September, 1986. The total enrolment at the Primary level was 21 students.

54) Interview with Réjean Aucoin, coordonnateur régional de la F.A.N.E., Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4 February, 1986.

55) Ibid. It was pointed out that the decision was made to avoid placing organizations like the "Co-operative" in a difficult position of defending the F.A.N.E.

56) Ibid.

57) The F.A.N.E.'s Minutes, op cit, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, February, 1982, (n.d.). The statement was made at a school ratepayers meeting by the Notre Dame school principal.

58) Interview with F.A.N.E. representative, op cit, 4 February, 1986.

59) The three prominent members of the P.F.B. interviewed, were implicated in most of the strategy, meetings with government officials and media interviews shared a common characteristic--the president had an English-speaking father, another also had an anglophone parent, and the third member was exclusively English-speaking.

60) Interview with the P.F.B. executive, op cit.

61) School authorities refused permission to distribute questionnaires on school property. Furthermore, the writer was discouraged from visiting the Notre Dame School because the issue was considered too sensitive. Indeed, Department of Education officials as well, suggested that any amount of questioning about Acadian Status might disturb local school authorities and community members.

62) A letter was sent to Chéticamp residents who had taken part in the School boycott (September, 1985). It was assumed that these protesters would have voted no in the plebiscite campaign. Only 36 of the 48 known protesters could be located. Thirty-six letters were sent and seventeen persons responded. Some of the results follow:

a) 12 respondents were English-speaking;

b) 6 respondents felt that Acadian Status meant an eventual all-French school;

c) 11 respondents felt that Acadian Status was the same as an all-French school in its legislated form;

d) 14 respondents felt that the F.A.N.E. was responsible for the community conflict;

e) 17 respondents feared that the English program would suffer and consequently handicap their children's chances for future employment.

63) The F.A.N.E.'s Papers/Minutes (1969-86), Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 13 March, 1985. Amongst the correspondence were copies of letters sent from the sundry francophone groups in support of Acadian Status.

64) Ibid.

65) Ibid.

66) Ibid.

67) Ibid. These retired Eudist priests are not to be confused with the present parish priest. In effect, Father Aucoin is the resident historian and Father Chiasson is the author of a book on the history of Chéticamp. It should be noted, paranthetically, that Chiasson's book furnished invaluable assistance for this paper.

Although the parish priest maintained a position of official neutrality in reference to Acadian Status, he was accused of favouritism when he allowed the announcement of a pro-Acadian Status speaker to be placed in the parish bulletin.

68) Interview with the P.F.B., op cit.

69) Ibid.

70) Ibid.

71) Interview with Raymond Roach, op cit. The assimilation rates are cited according to the following definition: "Lorsqu'une partie de la population d'un territoire donné perd sa langue pour emprunter celle d'une autre population." Hence, the rate of assimilation follows:

<u>County of Inverness rate of Assimilation</u>

1961	10.6
1971	11.5
1981	16.0

For more information concerning the method of analysis please consult the Atlas de l'Acadie. Petit Atlas des Francophones des Maritimes, (Moncton: New Brunswick, 1976), p.30.

72) Interview with the P.F.B., op cit. The P.F.B. referred to a survey of universities by Le Courrier to determine the quality of French demonstrated by N.D.A. high school graduates. In sum, the two francophone universities namely, the Université de Moncton (Moncton, New Brunswick) and the Université Ste-Anne claimed that they could not generalize regarding the students in question. (This argument was also found in the P.F.B. documentation package, op cit, p.10.)

73) Interview with the P.F.B., op cit. A sample of one child's homework was shown as partial proof of a viable bilingual program.

74) Ibid.

75) Ibid.

76) Ibid.

77) Ibid.

78) Interview with Raymond Roach, op cit.

79) Ibid.

80) "Pleasant Bay Parents to the Inverness Municipal School Board", Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, 12 December, 1985.

81) Ibid.

82) Le Courrier, op cit, February 12, 1982. This concern for increased anglicization in the Acadian schools appeared in this newspaper. A copy of this letter also was found in the F.A.N.E.'s files as well as in the P.F.B.'s documentation package (an English translation).

83) Ibid.

84) Ibid.

85) Ibid.

86) Interview with the F.A.N.E. (Chéticamp) representative, op cit.

87) Interview with P.F.B., op cit.

88) Ibid.

89) Ibid.

90) Ibid.

91) Ibid.

92) Ibid.

93) Ibid. One member of the executive said that some opening and closing remarks should have been made in French for the sake of courtesy.

94) Ibid.

95) Interview with Raymond Roach, op cit.

96) Ibid.

97) Ibid.

98) Ibid.

99) In 1982 the two communities of Clare and Argyle agreed to amalgamate in order to benefit from a new provincial funding formula. Refusal to do so would have resulted in increased taxes for the communities. "Pour Clare cici représente environ $500,000 et pour Argyle $750,000." (Le Courrier, op cit, 20 January, 1982.)

The Clare School Board, founded in 1944, was the only one that functioned exclusively in French. By contrast, the

Argyle School Board, despite a francophone population of 65-70%, functioned 65-70% in English. (Le Courrier, 20 January, 1982.)

The agreement stipulated that the new school board would function in French but a guaranteed system of simultaneous translation would be provided. The result of this decision taken by Donahoe, the Minister of Education, was a series of protests, petitions and confrontations by two opposing groups. Many of the same issues raised in the Chéticamp situation were debated during the dispute. After some difficulty during the transition period, there appears to be few major problems. (For a detailed description of the struggle consult Le Courrier (January to June, 1982 weekly issues).

100) Ibid.

101) "A Group of Concerned Acadians to the Parents For Bilingualism", Clare-Argyle, Nova Scotia, 15 October, 1985.

102) Ibid.

103) Ibid.

104) The F.A.N.E. Papers/Minutes, op cit, November, 1985.

105) Ibid.

106) Vince MacLean to writer, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1 April,1986. The Liberal provincial leader clarified his previous support for the plebiscite. According to MacLean, a plebiscite was only an indicator to determine what the people want. "In this particular case the indicators were that enough individuals wished to have ... an increased French language program."

107) Interview with Alexa McDonough, Halifax, 30 January, 1986.

108) Ibid.

109) Le Courrier, op cit, 30 October, 1985.

110) Ibid.

111) Interview with the P.F.B., op cit.

112) Ibid. Furthermore, P.F.B. documentation reinforced this notion of conspiracy (typewritten).

113) Ibid.

114) Ibid.

115) Ibid.

116) Ibid.

117) Ibid.

118) Department of Education senior official to writer, op cit.

119) Ibid.

120) Interview with Department of Education officials, op cit.

121) Ibid.

122) previously cited (see #105).

123) Interview with F.A.N.E. representative, op cit.

124) Ibid.

125) Ibid.

126) Interview with the P.F.B., op cit.

127) La Vie Acadienne, op cit, p.67. Members of the P.F.B. were surprised when the writer indicated that their suspicions of a financial connection between the Le Courrier and the F.A.N.E. were correct. Furthermore, discovery of financial arrangements with France was also confirmed. However, all the details are contained in the aforementioned history book currently used in Acadian schools.

128) Interview with F.A.N.E. representative, Chéticamp, op cit.

129) Ibid.

130) Ibid.

Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusions

Analysis and Conclusions

Two levels of explanation are introduced. The first, primarily expository, attempts a synthesis of the discrete events that form the historical background to the Chéticamp conflict. The second, adopting a more theoretical approach to the material, attempts to explain the dynamics of the conflict and its broader implications.

Historical Background

As detailed earlier, the history of Nova Scotian Acadians was marked by a forced migration in 1755, a subsequent return of some to their former farms (now occupied by English settlers), and their resettlement in remote areas of the province. The separate Acadian communities which dotted the provincial coastline shared a common anglophobic outlook and a desire to preserve their cherished values of religion, family and language. The francophone quest for cultural and linguistic survival was helped by their geographic isolation from non-francophones and little need or desire to leave the community for employment.

On the other hand, history taught the Acadians not to

depend on any outside group for assistance. In colonial times, France abandoned them and the British deported them. In the post-deportation period the successive British governments attempted to assimilate them, and until recent times provincial governments have denied the legitimacy of French instruction in Acadian schools. During the Confederation period, both the Catholic Church and French Canada failed to support Acadian linguistic rights in any substantive fashion. In any case, no constitutional linguistic guarantees were given to Nova Scotian Acadians. Again, in the post-Confederation period and until recent times, Québec was of little assistance to the francophones outside its provincial boundaries. Given these factors it is little wonder that Acadians forged their own identity and looked introspectively. However, limited contact with other francophone communities, and an absence of support for the French language and Acadian culture have decimated their numbers. In the past two centuries, thirteen Acadian areas have been assimilated, leaving only six distinct Acadian groups throughout the province.

The village of Chéticamp in the early 1950s was largely "institutionally complete"(1) in the context that most of its needs were met within the boundaries of the community. Indeed, there was little need to interact with

society at large. Its communal life, as expressed in such organs as the home, school, church and commerce was French in character and communication. Most of the employment was concentrated in the local fishing and forestry industries, although there was some outward migration in search of jobs.

The construction of the Canso Causeway, the highway expansion of the Cabot Trail and the development of the Cape Breton National Park in the 1950s effectively ended Chéticamp's isolation from the surrounding anglophone villages and the English-speaking society in general. These events produced some profound economic and linguistic changes within Chéticamp. First, the growth of the tourist trade stimulated the construction of motels, restaurants and handicraft boutiques. Second, the highway linkage to the adjacent anglophone villages allowed Chéticamp to become the centre for regional commerce, as well as schooling. Third, the National Park became an employment centre for the local residents. Concomitant with the increased economic prosperity was the inevitable increase of English usage by local merchants, park employees and virtually anyone in contact with English-speaking shoppers and tourists. An equally important phenomenon that accelerated English exposure and usage was the pervasive

popularity of English language media and music. Research data suggests that most present day residents have televisions, and despite the recent availability of French programs, there is an overall propensity to watch English programs. Even the leadership of the pro-Acadian Status group acknowledged a greater personal interest in watching English stations.

While French remained the dominant "working" language, knowledge of English was considered essential for pragmatic economic reasons. As noted earlier, there was little communal pressure for local anglophones to learn French. Tradition dictated that English was the medium of communication if even one anglophone was present at both formal and informal gatherings, with the notable exception of Catholic services, offered only in French. This has given a high status to English and has caused an intragroup bilingualism where either language is employed under most circumstances by Chéticamp Acadians. Further, the widespread use of English structures, syntax and vocabulary in French speech had become a serious problem for Acadian educators.

The impact of English in the local school became a source of friction in the late 1960s. The contacts with anglophones were compounded by a parallel increase of

exogamy. By 1986 the resident anglophone population was roughly 6 percent and the number of school children who could not speak French surpassed 25 percent of the enrolment. The school, a former buttress against assimilation, was transformed into a bilingual institution in less than two decades. Thus, the arena of education, ipso facto, became the battleground for a clash of linguistic and cultural values. In effect, Chéticamp emulated the national trend of increased anglicization of French minorities that has taken place over the last three or four decades. This concern was addressed by the F.A.N.E. at its first annual meeting in 1969 and every subsequent year thereafter. The F.A.N.E. is a pressure group attempting to maximize its own ability to influence decisions of primary concern related to its raison d'être.(2) After almost two decades of intense lobbying which included private meetings with government officials, marshalling Acadian support, sponsoring research studies, letter campaigns and other pressure tactics, the Government recognized some of the F.A.N.E.'s demands. Nevertheless, some external factors also influenced Nova Scotia into extending educational rights to the Acadians. First, there was the moral example of other provinces that demonstrated a greater sensitivity towards their francophone minority.

In fact, Nova Scotia lagged behind most of the provinces in this regard. Second, the Secretary of State's perennial critique regarding minority language rights incessantly berated provinces like Nova Scotia for not extending language rights and services. Third, the provincial premier was constantly reminded of the promise to extend the same linguistic rights to Nova Scotian francophones that existed for anglophones in the province of Québec. Fourth, there was a Minister of Education, sympathetic to the aspirations of the Acadians.

It is an interesting coincidence as well that the passage of Bill 65 only preceded the Canadian Charter by several months and that there was a fundamental incompatibility between the two pieces of legislation. In essence, Bill 65 appeared to be a distillate of compromises calculated to satisfy the minimum concerns of most affected parties. First, the Acadians appreciated the recognition as a separate identity, despite the fact that the assimilation issue was ignored. In spite of its limitations, the legislation was viewed as a step in the right direction. Second, the autonomous authority of the respective school boards was recognized, since any request for Acadian Status had to originate with them. Third, any student was free to pursue his/her studies exclusively in English. Fourth, no

major expenditure was to be required of either the provincial or the municipal governments. If one accepts the argument that radical or sudden change will provoke resistance to it,(3) Bill 65 was designed to avoid resistance, for it was neither radical nor sudden. In effect, even if the school boards chose Acadian Status, it could be phased in over a five year period or even longer, subject to the approval of the education minister. In other words, new rights were given to one group without penalizing other groups financially or educationally. It is little wonder the Education officials were bewildered by the vehement opposition that originated from within the Acadian communities when Acadian Status was implemented.

The Chéticamp Conflict

The notion of social conflict is the subject of much scholarly work and has spawned a plethora of varying definitions, descriptions, interpretations, debate and disagreement. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the sociological nomenclature is limited to generally identifiable terms, but with an explanation of certain concepts germane to the analysis. John Jackson's book Community and Conflict has been useful as a guide to the present study despite some fundamental differences.(4)

Indeed, some of Jackson's terminology, role descriptions and functions have been employed inasmuch as they facilitate an understanding of the notion of social conflict. The term "conflict" is employed in the context of a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals.(5) Further, the three requirements for a conflict are the presence of distinct groups, contact between them and an incompatibility of aims or outlooks.(6)

By the 1980s there were two diametrically opposed groups living in Chéticamp. One group believed that its language and culture were in danger of extinction and actively promoted the notion of Acadian Status. The second group denied that assimilation was a threat and opposed porposed educational changes. Both groups actively solicited the citizenry in an attempt to win converts to their respective points of view.

The educational debate crystalized cleavages that had existed for some time. An examination of the institutional life suggests that there were few organizations that brought the French-speaking and English-speaking residents together. In Jackson's terms there were few "forces of association".(7) By contrast, most were "forces of

disassociation" which separated anglophones and francophones, in theory or practice. For example, the F.A.N.E. and the Société St.-Pierre restricted their membership to francophones. Given their explicit goals of language and cultural maintenance this stipulation is not surprising. As noted earlier, the Catholic Church offered services exclusively in French, whereas the two smaller religious groups offered services exclusively in English.

Ironically, the board of trade was the only major institution where English was the sole medium of communication due to the presence of one anglophone. This was the result of common sense rather than deliberate policy. It seems likely that if the anglophone was to leave the area, the trade meetings would revert to French, given the fact that the rest of the membership is Acadian French. The Home and School Association restricted the use of English to a special question period. This situation became the contentious issue that recently caused the association to disband. In sum, it appears clear that most of the organizations would not qualify as "forces of association" because of their language requirement. It is also clear that none of the organizations aforementioned were prepared to offer a system of simultaneous translation for the convenience of the anglophones. Language did not constitute

a problem however, for the bilingual Acadians.

The conflict parties can be divided into two categories, namely conflict agencies and conflict agents. A "conflict agency" refers to any voluntary association based on language and culture. Its main function may consist of a supportive role or take the form of active participation.(8) Organizations such as the F.A.N.E., the F.P.A.N.E., the Société Sainte-Pierre, and the Enseignants Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse would fall in this category. Because their collective aim is to promote and preserve Acadian culture and the French language, it is no surprise to witness their active participation in government lobbying. On the other hand, local groups such as the Co-Op Society, the Catholic Church and the home and school groups tend to perform a more supportive role. Nonetheless, there were certain instances, as occurred during the plebiscite campaign, when a more assertive posture was exercised by these groups. Another term used in this study was the "conflict agent" which refers to an individual who promotes the interests of a social group because of the position that he/she holds in the institutional framework.(9) For example, the school superintendent, although not belonging to any francophone association, is obliged to execute Board policy which may promote francophone interests. Most of the

conflict agents involved in this study, other than the few government officials, are the Chéticamp school teachers. In their case, there was little difference between their required teaching duties pursuant to Bill 65 and their personal desires to promote the French language.

In 1983, the fear of Acadian Status created a new conflict agency called the Parents For Bilingualism. As detailed earlier, the leaders shared several characteristics:

1) they were not part of any existing institutional organization but were united with the explicit goal of defeating Acadian Status;

2) most members were either anglophone, married to an anglophone or had at least one parent who was anglophone;

3) most had lived in an anglophone community for varying periods of time;

4) the language most spoken in their homes was English;

5) the proposed changes were considered anathema to democracy and completely unwarranted in terms of language maintenance.

As noted, the P.F.B. demonstrated a tenacious determination to maintain the educational status quo. They employed a variety of lobbying tactics over a three-year period in an effort to persuade politicians at all levels of the political system, to support their viewpoint. In part, their efforts were successful for the School Board adopted a "partially Acadian Status" version which

guaranteed a bilingual administration and an extended implementation timetable. This apparent compromise by the Inverness School Board was of little solace to the P.F.B. because any changes were seen as a step towards an all-French school. This perspective can be understood in the context of a competition over the allocation of scarce resources and the loss of prestige and status for English. A gain for francophones was viewed as a loss for the anglophone component. As noted, the school was the only major institution where English officially enjoyed a dominant community position by virtue of the predominant English curriculum at the post-elementary level. Consequently, any resources utilized to ensure the linguistic survival of French would take away from the English-speaking students. Furthermore, because additional funds were not allocated for new programs, this perspective gained greater credibility. Equally important was the argument that the quality of anglophone education would invariably be diminished. In concrete terms, there would be the separation of Anglophones into "immersion classes", the likelihood of "doubling up" anglophone classes and the diversion of attention away from English students. Again, the most disquieting factor was the possibility of an eventual all-French school.

In sum, the P.F.B. feared that the de-emphasis of learning English would jeopardize their children's social and economic future in Canada. The dilemma was perceived between mobility of their children and maintenance of French. Equally important was the perception that Anglo-assimilation was not a local problem but the fabrication by a collection of francophone "radicals" throughout Canada whose principal goal was to implant unilingual French schools in bilingual communities. This elaborate theory of conspiracy articulated by the P.F.B. suggested that any supporter of the F.A.N.E., directly or otherwise, was part of this larger network.

The membership of the P.F.B., aside from a nucleus of less than ten persons, was fluid and difficult to determine because of its lack of formal organization or membership. It appears however, that at the height of the "plebiscite vote" over one-half of the local electorate rejected Acadian Status. Part of the explanation for their stance may reside in the general state of confusion over the nature of an Acadian school. Research data such as newspaper interviews, letters to the editor, open line radio programs, personal interviews and correspondence suggests that many people were genuinely confused over the issue. In this regard, the relevant governments failed to

deliver a clear, unequivocal policy statement to the people of Chéticamp. This absence permitted rumour, speculation and exaggeration to flourish during a three-year period. The provincial government's decision not to publize the findings of its Ministerial Committee to the municipal government's refusal to meet residents in the early planning stages, created an atmosphere of misunderstanding and mistrust. The notion of rumour should not be underestimated for it "... serves the same function as news, but it is resorted to where more established and routine sources of information are unreliable or untrustworthy."(10) In addition, School Board refusals to give such guarantees as a limit on French programs and the role of anglophones in the school, fuelled the notion of mistrust. It appears that when the Board finally became sensitized to the serious split in the village over schooling, its credibility was severely damaged and people were already aligned into opposing camps, each with entrenched positions. "Once contrast conceptions are formed, they are continually reinforced through selective perception. Sensory cues inconsistent with expectations are overlooked. Convictions can be reaffirmed even in the absence of definite evidence."(11) Therefore, it is no surprise that the last minute propaganda campaign by the

Board was ineffectual in convincing most of the electorate of its sincerity and honesty. However, research data suggests that even if the electorate was aware of the definition of Acadian Status the plebiscite results would still have revealed a large segment of the population in opposition. The F.A.N.E. leadership claims that if the vote was held today the results would be reversed. If this assertion is correct, it indicates that at least 40 percent of the electorate are cognizant of the value of Acadian Status but are not in sympathy with it. It is difficult to identify the specific reasons but it appears that people are convinced that an all-French school will eventually be established in Chéticamp. Whether this phobia is the result of successful propaganda on the part of the P.F.B. is a moot point. Nonetheless, further research is warranted in regard to this question.

The second conflict agency that emerged out of the school controversy was "le Comité pour le Oui". This group, sponsored by the F.A.N.E., spearheaded the local movement for Acadian Status. This conflict agency represented all the recognized leaders of the community including the Notre Dame School principal, most of the teachers, business leaders, prominent retired priests, as well as collective groups such as the Co-Op executive. Collectively, they were

convinced that Chéticamp was becoming assimilated as demonstrated by the anglicization in the school in particular and the community in general. Thus, they endorsed the F.A.N.E.'s initiatives to request government assistance in the battle against this assimilation.

Despite the fact that Acadian Status was heralded as a progressive step, "Le Comité pour le Oui" and its successor "l'Association des Parents Acadiens", maintained that this measure did not deal with the critical problem of increased English in the School. Consequently, a lawyer was engaged to peruse the viability of legal action to acquire greater control over education, pursuant to the terms of the Canadian Charter. The latter objective has been placed temporarily in abeyance until the legacy of community acrimony abates and the support of more residents secured.

Conclusion

The Chéticamp conflict can best be understood in the historical context of the French-English struggle in Canada. Equality for both languages in Nova Scotia, as in other anglophone provinces, was never a government priority. Despite the frequent government promises, language legislation promoting French usage in Acadian schools is only a recent development. The French minority

was expected to adjust to an all-English educational system and ultimately to the language itself. Yet, Chéticamp was able to resist assimilation largely because of its isolation, vigorous Church leadership, limited contact with the English world, and a strong sense of community. In the last twenty years however, these four aspects of Chéticamp life have been critically weakened or completely destroyed. First, isolation has come to an end. Contact with English-speaking neighbours and tourists has altered the former French-speaking village. Second, a new relationship had developed between the clergy and the community. The dynamic leadership exercised by such priests as Father Pierre Fiset has disappeared for the clergy no longer wield secular leadership. Even during the plebiscite debate the parish priest maintained a neutral public profile despite his acknowledged support for all-French religious services. Third, the greatest threat of all is perhaps the popularity of English media. "It has been estimated that Canadian children spend twice as much time watching television as they do sitting in school."(12) Thus, the values of an overwhelming English-speaking and Americanized society reach almost every home.(13) The advent of French television and radio programs has not been able to compete successfully with English channels because of their lack of

variety. As noted, even the most ardent supporters of Acadian Status prefer English programs. Fourth, the notion of work and economic success has supplanted the former values of community, family and the church.(14) Like other Canadian minorities, there is a fear that their language will handicap their chances of financial and social success.(15)

One of the most important questions raised by this study is whether the Chéticamp controversy is an insular phenemenon or whether it has wider implications. In the historical context, as mentioned earlier, the Chéticamp conflict shared many characteristics with antecedent linguistic struggles in Clare-Argyle, Nova Scotia, Tecumseh and Sturgeon Falls, Ontario, and Grand Falls, New Brunswick. In these cases the citizenry reluctantly took opposing positions vis-à-vis attempts to increase French usage in their respective communities. In sum, the notion of French as a viable language of school/community life became the heart of the conflicts. Moreover, a recurring theme was the need for educational authorities and provincial governments to communicate to parents the positive results of research into minority-language instruction regarding all-French schools. The latter point continues as the major obstacle to converting francophone

parents to this concept.

In more recent times, the Chéticamp controversy caused important repercussions at the local, provincial and regional levels. For example, some other Acadian communities in Cape Breton requested, and received, Government support for Acadian Status. Additionally, there is a possibility that other Acadian communities throughout Nova Scotia will receive greater French content in their community schools. Equally important was the support and involvement demonstrated by other provincial francophone associations across Canada. The Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin of Prince Edward Island for example, closely monitored the Chéticamp struggle and applauded the efforts of the F.A.N.E. Further, there is a similar movement to achieve greater linguistic rights for the francophones of P.E.I. On the other hand, the New Brunswick Acadians are in a much better linguistic position because of their greater numbers, political strength and the bilingual status of the province. It should be noted however, that New Brunswick Acadians are far from achieving linguistic equality in most government spheres. At the national level, recent language conflicts in St. Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba as well as Prescott-Russell and Penetang, Ontario shared some common elements with the

Chéticamp situation. The most significant concern was the perception that any decrease of English content in the schools would handicap the economic and social mobility of French-speaking children. This issue is crucial and should cause reflection among those who are interested in the future of French-speaking populations.

The advent of the Canadian Charter has caused a number of court cases in conjunction with a heightened sensitivity to francophone rights by various govenment levels and populations throughout Canada. For example, an 1984 Ontario survey showed that "... 72% of the respondents were in favour of enacting a law to guarantee the availability of French-language services where numbers warrant."(16) While this same survey refused to endorse the Macdonald Commission's recommendation that Ontario recognize English and French as official languages,(17) it did accept extended French services. Moreover, other provinces have indicated their varying degree of interest in broadening French services. As noted, Manitoba is in the process of translating its legal and legislative records into French, court cases in Alberta and Saskatchewan have adjudicated in favour of granting francophones greater control over their schooling, and the North West Territories' Government has conferred official status to French.(18)

Indeed, the unprecedented opportunity to extend francophone rights seems within the grasp of some discrete francophone communities across Canada. Again, the major obstacle may be the inability to convince francophone parents that increased French content in the schools is necessary. The Commissioner of Official Languages, in the 1985 annual report, acknowledged the importance of this contentious "issue". He posited that "... the present system leads directly to assimilation while the creation of French-language schools in no way harms the learning of English. "(19) Although this assertion is based on social and pedagogical studies, it will take a concerted effort on the part of government officials in concert with francophone associations, to convince concerned parents of its cogency.

In Chéticamp, the issue of Acadian Status has been resolved, but the opposing conflict agencies remain intact for the conditions for the conflict remain unresolved. This is illustrated by the unsuccessful attempts by the P.F.B. to have the legislation rescinded. Coupled with the Inverness School Board's adamant refusal to even reexamine the school issue was the local anglophone parents' decision to allow the placement of their children in the French "immersion class" at the Primary level. Despite these

setbacks, the P.F.B. group vows to continue the battle. Such persistence may be explained by the perceived injustice in conjunction with the local social pressure to continue the struggle. To admit defeat may risk disapproval and derision from friends, supporters and acquaintances.

In the final analysis, the school has become the "battleground" for a community's struggle for linguistic and cultural hegemony. One group favours a community where residents may communicate exclusively in English but possess the ability to speak French. The opposing group favours a community where the residents communicate exclusively in French but possess the ability to speak English fluently. Given these opposing perceptions, the prognosis is additional conflict unless the underlying conditions for conflict are resolved.

This study raises more questions than answers and requires further substantiation and analysis. For example, such notions as the inherent problems of bilingual schools, viability of all-French schools, ways to assist the French-speaking minorities to resist assimilation, and the role of the English media on francophone communities could provide complementary data for the present study. It is clear however, that Bill 65 established the legal recognition of the French language in Acadian schools but

was not designed to combat the widespread malaise of assimilation. Indeed, unless greater linguistic protections are implemented by the Government, assimilation appears inexorable. On the other hand, there is reason for a certain degree of guarded optimism; perhaps the remedial effect of the Canadian Charter and the resurgence of a dynamic, assertive Québec will give francophones a real opportunity to regain lost ground.(20) As noted earlier, other Cape Breton schools are scheduled to implement Acadian Status. Nevertheless, the Sydney school board has denied the request for greater French schooling. Consequently, a group of francophone parents have legally challenged this decision based on the Charter. In short, it seems clear that the struggle for linguistic rights may have to await an unequivocal decision by the Supreme Court of Canada.

In search for an immediate solution to the Chéticamp situation the relevant governments should coordinate their efforts to address the legitimate needs of both groups. Francophone demands, however, for greater control over their schooling should be given priority for historical, equitable, and compassionate reasons.

Footnotes(Chapter VI)

1) John D. Jackson, Community and Conflict, (Montreal: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston of Canada, 1975), p.5. Jackson quotes Raymond Breton's description of institutional completeness.

2) A. Paul Pross (ed.) Pressure Group Behaviour in Canadian Politics, (Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1975), p.148.

3) Ibid, p.167

4) John D. Jackson, op cit. Jackson's study deals with a language conflict in the town of Tecumseh, Ontario. Despite some commonality with the present study, Jackson's analysis contains the additional components of English Catholics and English Protestants who play vital roles as conflict parties. Furthermore, in the Tecumseh conflict the francophones were a minority, whereas in the Chéticamp situation the anglophones constitute the minority.

5) A. Paul Pross (ed.), op cit, p.167.

6) John.D.Jackson, op cit, p.5.

7) Ibid, p.58.

8) Ibid.

9) A. Paul Pross, op cit, p.196.

10) Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kivan, Ethnic Stratification, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p.386.

11) Ibid.

12) Howard and Tamara Palmer (eds.), A History of French-Speaking Albertans, (Saskatoon: Western Prairie Books, 1985), p.106.

13) Ibid.

14) Ibid, p.107.

15) Ibid.

16) The Commissioner of Official Languages Annual Report,

(Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1985), p. 156.

17) Ibid.

18) Ibid.

19) Ibid, p.153.

20) Howard and Tamara Palmer, op cit, p. 108.

Epiloque

As noted earlier, the designation of Acadian Status was accepted for the Chéticamp School (Notre Dame de l'Annonciation). Despite repeated protests by Arnold Dithurbide representing the Parents for Bilingualism, the Inverness Municipal School Board officially implemented the first stage of Acadian Status for the school year commencing September, 1986. However, the full effect of the gradual program will not be complete for all the grades until 1992. In sum, Acadian Status for the Chéticamp School guarantees a bilingual administration, an optional "French immersion" program for non-francophones at the elementary level, an all-English stream for those who wish to follow their education entirely in English at the post-elementary level, and a combined number of courses taught in English and French for students who choose the Acadian stream.

Despite the prolonged school conflict and bitterly fought plebiscite campaign, it appears that most Chéticamp residents have accepted the educational changes. Threats of further school boycotts, litigation or refusal to accept school changes have not materialized. In fact, the implementation of the School's elementary "French immersion program" in September, 1986, marked the first major test for the community because it segregated English-speaking

from French-speaking students. Again, parental opposition to this program dissipated; nine English-speaking students were placed in this program, whereas the other primary class had an enrolment of twenty-one French-speaking students.

In the final analysis, the underlying causes of the conflict have not disappeared. One group is not convinced that Acadian Status in its present form is not an adequate vehicle to stop Anglo-assimilation. Thus, a greater control of the School's management and increased French content is desired. By contrast, another group perceives Acadian Status as a first step toward an all-French school. Both positions are incompatible and continued opposition seems inevitable. Nonetheless, it appears that the majority of Chéticamp citizens are willing to accept the recent school changes but not the concept of an all-French school.

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Aucoin, Réjean, coordonnateur régional de la F.A.N.E. (6 December 1985; 16 August 1986; 12 September 1986).

Dithurbide, Arnold, president of the Parents for Bilingualism (6 December 1985).

Nova Scotia Department of Education (4 November 1985 and 20 June 1986).

Ben Samson, president de la F.A.N.E. (4 November 1985).

A host of letters from many of the principals involved in the Chéticamp language conflict.

VI. Interviews

Réjean Aucoin, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia,
2, 3, 6 February 1986.
-phone interview, 18 August 1986.
-phone interview, 15 September 1986.

Arnold Dithurbide, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia,
2, 4 February 1986.

-phone interview, 16 August 1986.

Marie-Claire Doucet, coordonnateur régional des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 5 February 1986.

Alexa McDonough, leader of the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 30 January 1986.

Len Kuniski, Superintendent of schools for Inverness County, Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, 1 February 1986.

Raymond Roach, President of the Association des Parents Acadiens, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4, 6 February 1986.

Ben Samson, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 29 January 1986.

Groups

Acadian married couple, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4, 7, 8 February 1986.

Acadian students, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 6 February 1986.

Acadian women's group, Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 6 February 1986.

Nova Scotia Department of Education Senior Officials, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 29 January 1986.

Parents for Bilingualism (Executive), Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, 4 February 1986.

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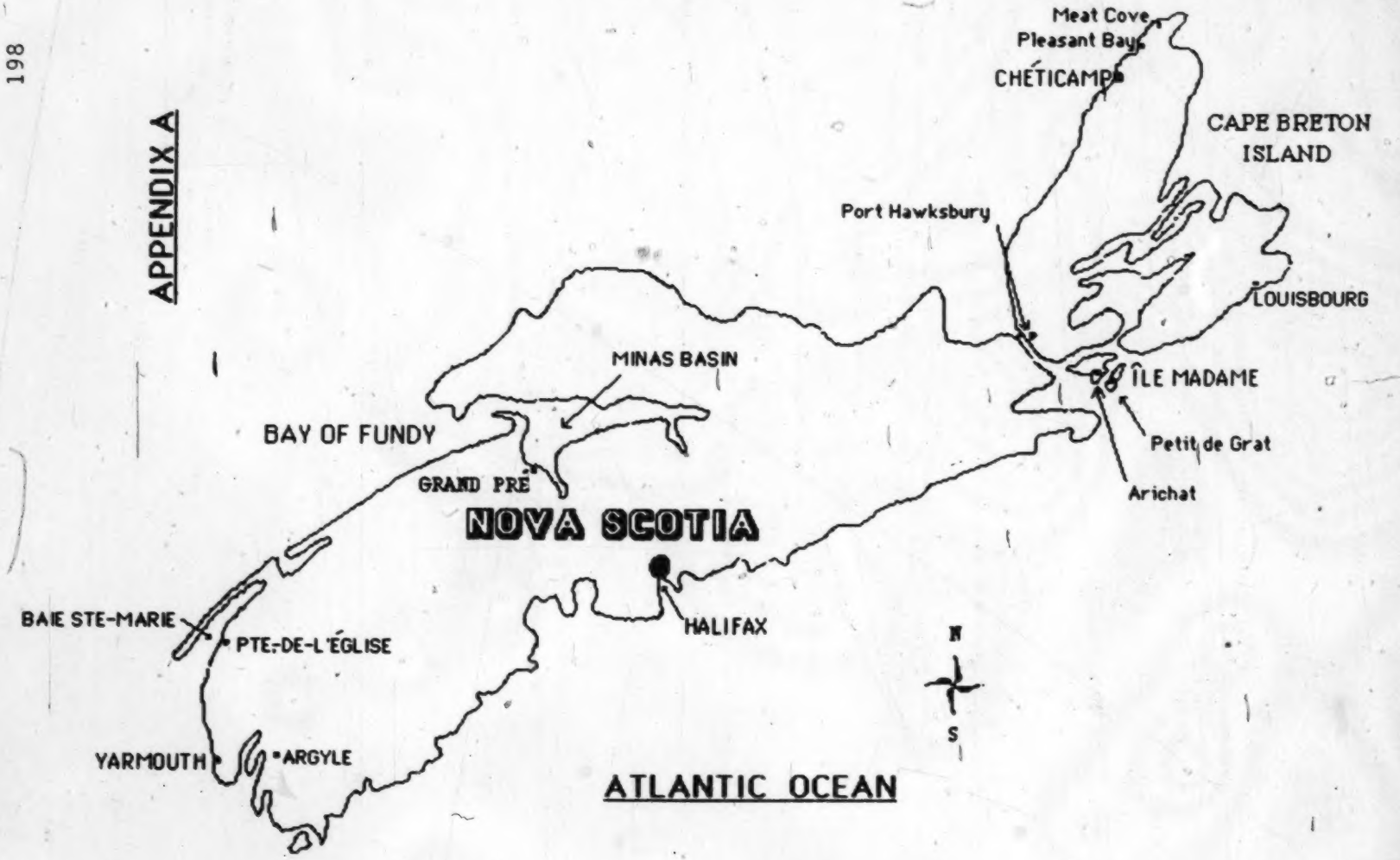
APPENDIX A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Pleasant Bay
CHÉTICAMP
CAPE BRETON ISLAND
Port Hawksbury
LOUISBOURG
MINAS BASIN
ÎLE MADAME
BAY OF FUNDY
Petit de Grat
GRAND PRÉ
Arichat
NOVA SCOTIA
HALIFAX
BAIE STE-MARIE
PTE-DE-L'ÉGLISE
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YARMOUTH
ARGYLE
ATLANTIC OCEAN